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L I V E S
OF THE
ENGLISH POETS;
AND A
C R I T I C I S M
ON THEIR
W O R K S.

BY SAMUEL JOHNSON.

VOL. III.

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G A Y.

JOHN GAY, descended from an old family that had been long in possession of the manour of * Goldworthy in Devonshire, was born in 1688, at or near Barnstaple, where he was educated by Mr. Luck, who taught the school of that town with good reputation, and, a little before he retired from it, published a volume of Latin and English verses. Under such a master he was likely to form a taste for poetry. Being born without prospect of hereditary riches, he was sent to London in his youth, and placed apprentice with a silk mercer.

How long he continued behind the counter, or with what degree of softness and dexterity he received and accommodated the ladies, as he probably took no delight in telling it, is not known. The report is, that he was soon weary of either the restraint or servility of his occupation, and easily persuaded his master to discharge him.

* *Goldworthy* does not appear in the *Villars*.

The dutchess of Monmouth, remarkable for inflexible perseverance in her demand to be treated as a princess, in 1712 took Gay into her service as secretary: by quitting a shop for such service he might gain leisure, but he certainly advanced little in the boast of independence. Of his leisure he made so good use, that he published next year a poem on *Rural Sports*, and inscribed it to Mr. Pope, who was then rising fast into reputation. Pope was pleased with the honour; and when he became acquainted with Gay found such attractions in his manners and conversation, that he seems to have received him into his inmost confidence; and a friendship was formed between them which lasted to their separation by death, without any known abatement on either part. Gay was the general favourite of the whole association of wits; but they regarded him as a play-fellow rather than a partner, and treated him with more fondness than respect.

Next year he published *The Shepherd's Week*, six English Pastorals, in which the images are drawn from real life, such as it appears among the rusticks in parts of England remote from London. Steele in some papers of the *Guardian* had praised Ambrose Philips as the Pastoral writer that yielded only to Theocritus, Virgil, and Spenser. Pope, who had also published Pastorals, not pleased to be overlooked, drew up a comparison of his own compositions with those



those of Philips, in which he covertly gave himself the preference, while he seemed to disown it. Not content with this, he is supposed to have incited Gay to write the *Shepherd's Week*, to shew, that if it be necessary to copy nature with minuteness, rural life must be exhibited such as grossness and ignorance have made it. So far the plan was reasonable; but the Pastorals are introduced by a *Proem*, written with such imitation as they could attain of obsolete language, and by consequence in a style that was never spoken nor written in any age or in any place.

But the effect of reality and truth became conspicuous, even when the intention was to shew them groveling and degraded. These Pastorals became popular, and were read with delight as just representations of rural manners and occupations by those who had no interest in the rivalry of the poets, nor knowledge of the critical dispute.

In 1713 he brought a comedy called *The Wife of Bath* upon the stage, but it received no applause; he printed it, however; and seventeen years after, having altered it, and, as he thought, adapted it more to the publick taste, he offered it again to the town; but though he was flushed with the success of the *Beggar's Opera*, had the mortification to see it again rejected.

In the last year of queen Anne's life, Gay was made secretary to the earl of Clarendon, ambassador to the court of Hanover. This was a station that naturally gave him hopes of kindness from every party; but the Queen's death put an end to her favours, and he had dedicated his *Shepherd's Week* to Bolingbroke, which Swift considered as the crime that obstructed all kindness from the house of Hanover.

He did not, however, omit to improve the right which his office had given him to the notice of the royal family. On the arrival of the princess of Wales he wrote a poem, and obtained so much favour that both the Prince and Princess went to see his *What d'ye call it*, a kind of mock-tragedy, in which the images were comick, and the action grave, so that, as Pope relates, Mr. Cromwel, who could not hear what was said, was at a loss how to reconcile the laughter of the audience with the solemnity of the scene.

Of this performance the value certainly is but little; but it was one of the lucky trifles that give pleasure by novelty, and was so much favoured by the audience that envy appeared against it in the form of criticism; and Griffen a player in conjunction with Mr. Theobald, a man afterwards more remarkable, produced a pamphlet called the *Key to the What d'ye call*

call it; which, says Gay, calls me a blockhead, and Mr. Pope a knave.

But Fortune has always been inconstant. Not long afterwards (1717) he endeavoured to entertain the town with *Three Hours after Marriage*; a comedy written, as there is sufficient reason for believing, by the joint assistance of Pope and Arbuthnot. One purpose of it was to bring into contempt Dr. Woodward the Fossilist, a man not really or justly contemptible. It had the fate which such outrages deserve: the scene in which Woodward was directly and apparently ridiculed, by the introduction of a mummy and a crocodile, disgusted the audience, and the performance was driven off the stage with general condemnation.

Gay is represented as a man easily incited to hope, and deeply depressed when his hopes were disappointed. This is not the character of a hero; but it may naturally supply something more generally welcome, a soft and civil companion. Whoever is apt to hope good from others is diligent to please them; but he that believes his powers strong enough to force their own way, commonly tries only to please himself.

He had been simple enough to imagine that those who laughed at the *What d'ye call it* would

would raise the fortune of its author; and finding nothing done, sunk into dejection. His friends endeavoured to divert him. The Earl of Burlington sent him (1716) into Devonshire; the year after, Mr. Pulteney took him to Aix; and in the following year lord Harcourt invited him to his seat, where, during his visit, the two rural lovers were killed with lightning, as is particularly told in Pope's Letters.

Being now generally known, he published (1720) his Poems by subscription with such success, that he raised a thousand pounds; and called his friends to a consultation, what use might be best made of it. Lewis, the steward of lord Oxford, advised him to intrust it to the funds, and live upon the interest; Arbuthnot bad him intrust it to Providence, and live upon the principal; Pope directed him, and was seconded by Swift, to purchase an annuity.

Gay in that disastrous year * had a present from young Craggs of some South-sea-stock, and once supposed himself to be master of twenty thousand pounds. His friends persuaded him to sell his share; but he dreamed of dignity and splendour, and could not bear to obstruct his own fortune. He was then importuned to sell as much as would purchase an hundred a year for life, *which says Fenton, will make*

* Spence.

make you sure of a clean shirt and a shoulder of mutton every day. This counsel was rejected; the profit and principal were lost, and Gay sunk under the calamity so low that his life became in danger.

By the care of his friends, among whom Pope appears to have shewn particular tenderness, his health was restored; and, returning to his studies, he wrote a tragedy called *The Captives*, which he was invited to read before the princess of Wales. When the hour came, he saw the princess and her ladies all in expectation, and advancing with reverence, too great for any other attention, stumbled at a stool, and falling forwards, threw down a weighty Japan screen. The princess started, the ladies screamed, and poor Gay after all the disturbance was still to read his play.

The fate of *The Captives* * I know not; but he now thought himself in favour, and undertook (1726) to write a volume of Fables for the improvement of the young duke of Cumberland. For this he is said to have been promised a reward, which he had doubtless magnified with all the wild expectations of indigence and vanity.

Next year the Prince and Princess became King and Queen, and Gay was to be great and

* It was acted at Drury-Lane in 1723.

and happy; but upon the settlement of the household he found himself appointed gentleman usher to the princess Louisa. By this offer he thought himself insulted, and sent a message to the Queen, that he was too old for the place. There seem to have been many machinations employed afterwards in his favour, and diligent court was paid to Mrs. Howard, afterwards countess of Suffolk, who was much beloved by the King and Queen, to engage her interest for his promotion; but solicitations, verses, and flatteries were thrown away; the lady heard them, and did nothing.

All the pain which he suffered from the neglect, or, as he perhaps termed it, the ingratitude of the court, may be supposed to have been driven away by the unexampled success of the *Beggar's Opera*. This play, written in ridicule of the musical Italian Drama, was first offered to Cibber and his brethren at Drury-Lane, and rejected; it being then carried to Rich, had the effect, as was ludicrously said, of *making Gay rich and Rich gay*.

Of this lucky piece, as the reader cannot but wish to know the original and progress, I have inserted the relation which Spence has given in Pope's words,

"Dr. Swift had been observing once to Mr. Gay, what an odd pretty sort of a thing a
Newgate

“ Newgate Pastoral might make. Gay was inclined to try at such a thing for some time ;
“ but afterwards thought it would be better
“ to write a comedy on the same plan. This
“ was what gave rise to the *Beggar's Opera*.
“ He began on it; and when first he mentioned it to Swift, the doctor did not much like
“ the project. As he carried it on, he shewed
“ what he wrote to both of us, and we now-
“ and-then gave a correction, or a word or
“ two of advice; but it was wholly of his own
“ writing.—When it was done, neither of us
“ thought it would succeed.—We shewed it to
“ Congreve; who, after reading it over, said,
“ It would either take greatly, or be damned
“ confoundedly.—We were all, at the first
“ night of it, in great uncertainty of the event;
“ till we were very much encouraged by over-
“ hearing the duke of Argyle, who sat in the
“ next box to us, say, “ It will do—it must
“ do! I see it in the eyes of them.” This was
“ a good while before the first Act was over,
“ and so gave us ease soon; for that duke (be-
“ sides his own good taste) has a particular
“ knack, as any one now living, in discover-
“ ing the taste of the publick. He was quite
“ right in this, as usual; the good nature of
“ the audience appeared stronger and stronger
“ every act, and ended in a clamour of ap-
“ plause.

Its

Its reception is thus recorded in the notes to the *Dunciad*:

" This piece was received with greater ap-
" plause than was ever known. Besides being
" acted in London sixty-three days without in-
" terruption, and renewed the next season with
" equal applause, it spread into all the great
" towns of England; was played in many
" places to the thirtieth and fortieth time; at
" Bath and Bristol fifty, &c. It made its pro-
" gress into Wales, Scotland, and Ireland,
" where it was performed twenty-four days
" successively. The ladies carried about with
" them the favourite songs of it in fans, and
" houses were furnished with it in screens.
" The fame of it was not confined to the au-
" thor only. The person who acted Polly,
" till then obscure, became all at once the fa-
" vourite of the town; her pictures were en-
" graved, and sold in great numbers; her Life
" written, books of letters and verses to her
" published, and pamphlets made even of her
" sayings and jests. Furthermore, it drove out
" of England (for that season) the Italian
" Opera, which had carried all before it for
" ten years."

Of this performance, when it was printed,
the reception was different, according to the
different opinion of its readers. Swift com-
mended it for the excellence of its morality, as
a piece

a piece that *placed all kinds of vice in the strongest and most odious light*; but others, and among them Dr. Herring, afterwards archbishop of Canterbury, censured it as giving encouragement not only to vice but to crimes, by making a highwayman the hero, and dismissing him at last unpunished. It has been even said that after the exhibition of the *Beggar's Opera* the gangs of robbers were evidently multiplied.

Both these decisions are surely exaggerated. The play, like many others, was plainly written only to divert, without any moral purpose, and is therefore not likely to do good; nor can it be conceived, without more speculation than life requires or admits, to be productive of much evil. Highwaymen and house-breakers seldom frequent the playhouse, or mingle in any elegant diversion; nor is it possible for any one to imagine that he may rob with safety, because he sees Macheath reprieved upon the stage.

This objection however, or some other rather political than moral, obtained such prevalence, that when Gay produced a second part under the name of *Polly*, it was prohibited by the Lord Chamberlain; and he was forced to recompense his repulse by a subscription, which is said to have been so liberally bestowed, that what he called oppression ended in profit.

The

The * publication was so much favoured, that though the first part gained him four hundred pounds, near thrice as much was the profit of the second.

He received yet another recompense for this supposed hardship, in the affectionate attention of the duke and dutchess of Queensbury, into whose house he was taken, and with whom he passed the remaining part of his life. The † duke, considering his want of œconomy, undertook the management of his money, and gave it to him as he wanted it. But it is supposed that the discountenance of the Court sunk deep into his heart, and gave him more discontent than the applauses or tenderness of his friends could overpower. He soon fell into his old distemper, an habitual colick, and languished, though with many intervals of ease and cheerfulness, till a violent fit at last seized him, and hurried him to the grave, as Arbuthnot reported, with more precipitance than he had ever known. He died on the fourth of December 1732, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. The letter which brought an account of his death to Swift was laid by for some days unopened, because when he received it he was imprest with the preconception of some misfortune.

* Spence.

† Spence.

After

After his death was published a second volume of Fables more political than the former. His opera of *Achilles* was acted, and the profits were given to two widow sisters, who inherited what he left, as his lawful heirs; for he died without a will, though he had gathered * three thousand pounds. There have appeared likewise under his name a comedy called the *Distrest Wife*, and the *Rehearsal at Gotham*, a piece of humour.

The character given him by Pope † is this, that *he was a natural man, without design, who spoke what he thought, and just as he thought it; and that he was of a timid temper, and fearful of giving offence to the great; which caution however, says Pope, was of no avail.*

As a poet, he cannot be rated very high. He was, as I once heard a female critick remark, *of a lower order*. He had not in any great degree the *mens divinius*, the dignity of genius. Much however must be allowed to the author of a new species of composition, though it be not of the highest kind. We owe to Gay the Ballad Opera; a mode of comedy which at first was supposed to delight only by its novelty, but has now by the experience of half a century been found so well accommodated to the disposition of a popular audience, that it is likely to keep long possession of

* Spence.

† Spence.

the stage. Whether this new drama was the product of judgment or of luck, the praise of it must be given to the inventor; and there are many writers read with more reverence, to whom such merit of originality cannot be attributed.

His first performance, the *Rural Sports*, is such as was easily planned and executed; it is never contemptible, nor ever excellent. The *Fan* is one of those mythological fictions which antiquity delivers ready to the hand; but which, like other things that lie open to every one's use, are of little value. The attention naturally retires from a new tale of Venus, Diana, and Minerva.

His Fables seem to have been a favourite work; for having published one volume, he left another behind him. Of this kind of Fables, the authors do not appear to have formed any distinct or settled notion. Phædrus evidently confounds them with *Tales*, and Gay both with *Tales* and *Allegories*. A *Fable* or *Apologue*, such as is now under consideration, seems to be, in its genuine state, a narrative in which beings irrational, and sometimes inanimate, *arbores loquuntur, non tantum feræ*, are, for the purpose of moral instruction, feigned to act and speak with human interests and passions. To this description the compositions of Gay do not always conform. For a Fable he
gives

gives now and then a Tale or an Allegory ; and from some, by whatever name they may be called, it will be difficult to extract any moral principle. They are, however, told with liveliness ; the versification is smooth, and the diction, though now-and-then a little constrained by the measure or the rhyme, is generally happy.

To *Trivia* may be allowed all that it claims : it is spritely, various, and pleasant. The subject is of that kind which Gay was by nature qualified to adorn ; yet some of his decorations may be justly wished away. An honest blacksmith might have done for Patty what is performed by Vulcan. The appearance of Cloacina is nauseous and superfluous ; a shoe-boy could have been produced by the casual cohabitation of mere mortals. Horace's rule is broken in both cases ; there is no *dignus vindice nodus*, no difficulty that required any supernatural interposition. A patten may be made by the hammer of a mortal, and a bastard may be dropped by a human strumpet. On great occasions, and on small, the mind is repelled by useless and apparent falsehood.

Of his little Poems the publick judgment seems to be right ; they are neither much esteemed, nor totally despised. Those that please least are the pieces to which *Gulliver* gave occasion ;

casion; for who can much delight in the echo of an unnatural fiction?

Dione is a counterpart to *Amynta*, and *Pastor Fido*, and other trifles of the same kind, easily imitated, and unworthy of imitation. What the Italians call comedies from a happy conclusion, Gay calls a tragedy from a mournful event, but the stile of the Italians and of Gay is equally tragical. There is something in the poetical *Arcadia* so remote from known reality and speculative possibility, that we can never support its representation through a long work. A Pastoral of an hundred lines may be endured; but who will hear of sheep and goats, and myrtle bowers and purling rivulets, through five acts? Such scenes please Barbarians in the dawn of literature, and children in the dawn of life; but will be for the most part thrown away, as men grow wise, and nations grow learned.

B R O O M E.

WILLIAM BROOME was born in Cheshire, as is said, of very mean parents. Of the place of his birth, or the first part of his life, I have not been able to gain any intelligence. He was educated upon the foundation at Eaton, and was captain of the school a whole year, without any vacancy, by which he might have obtained a scholarship at King's College. Being by this delay, such as is said to have happened very rarely, superannuated, he was sent to St. John's College by the contributions of his friends, where he obtained a small exhibition.

At his College he lived for some time in the same chamber with the well-known Ford, by whom I have formerly heard him described as a contracted scholar and a mere versifyer, unacquainted with life, and unskilful in conversation. His addiction to metre was then such, that his companions familiarly called him *Poet*. When he had opportunities of mingling with mankind, he cleared himself, as Ford likewise owned, from great part of his scholastick rust.

He appeared early in the world as a translator of the *Iliads* into prose, in conjunction with Ozel and Oldisworth. How their several parts were distributed is not known. This is the translation of which Ozel boasted as superior, in Toland's opinion, to that of Pope: it has long since vanished, and is now in no danger from the criticks.

He was introduced to Mr. Pope, who was then visiting Sir John Cotton at Madingley near Cambridge, and gained so much of his esteem that he was employed, I believe, to make extracts from Eustathius for the notes to the translation of the *Iliad*; and in the volumes of poetry published by Lintot, commonly called *Pope's Miscellanies*, many of his early pieces were inserted.

Pope and Broome were to be yet more closely connected. When the success of the *Iliad* gave encouragement to a version of the *Odyssey*, Pope, weary of the toil, called Fenton and Broome to his assistance; and, taking only half the work upon himself, divided the other half between his partners, giving four books to Fenton, and eight to Broome. Fenton's books I have enumerated in his Life; to the lot of Broome fell the second, sixth, eighth, eleventh, twelfth, sixteenth, eighteenth, and twenty-third, together with the burthen of writing all the notes.

As this translation is a very important event in poetical history, the reader has a right to know upon

upon what grounds I establish my narration. That the version was not wholly Pope's was always known: he had mentioned the assistance of two friends in his proposals, and at the work in some account is given by Broome of their different parts, which however mentions only five books as written by the coadjutors; the fourth and twentieth by Fenton; the sixth, the eleventh, and the eighteenth by himself; though Pope, in an advertisement prefixed afterwards to a new volume of his works, claimed only twelve. A natural curiosity after the real conduct of so great an undertaking, incited me once to enquire of Dr. Warburton, who told me, in his warm language, that he thought the relation given in the note *a lie*; but that he was not able to ascertain the several shares. The intelligence which Dr. Warburton could not afford me; I obtained from Mr. Langton, to whom Mr. Spence had imparted it.

The price at which Pope purchased this assistance was three hundred pounds paid to Fenton, and five hundred to Broome, with as many copies as he wanted for his friends, which amounted to one hundred more. The payment made to Fenton I know but by hearsay; Broome's is very distinctly told by Pope, in the notes to the *Dunciad*.

It is evident, that, according to Pope's own estimate, Broome was unkindly treated. If four

books could merit three hundred pounds, eight and all the notes, equivalent at least to four, had certainly a right to more than six.

Broome probably considered himself as injured, and there was for some time more than coldness between him and his employer. He always spoke of Pope as too much a lover of money, and Pope pursued him with avowed hostility; for he not only named him disrespectfully in the *Dunciad*, but quoted him more than once in the *Bathos* as a proficient in the *Art of Sinking*; and in his enumeration of the different kinds of poets distinguished for the profound, he reckons Broome among *the Parrots who repeat another's words in such a hoarse odd tone as makes them seem their own*. I have been told that they were afterwards reconciled; but I am afraid their peace was without friendship.

He afterwards published a Miscellany of Poems, which is inserted, with corrections, in the new compilation of his works.

He never rose to very high dignity in the church. He was some time rector of Sturston in Suffolk, where he married a wealthy widow; and afterwards, when the king visited Cambridge (1728), became Doctor of Laws. He was (1733) presented by the Crown to the rectory of *Pulham* in *Norfolk*, which he held with *Oakley Magna* in *Suffolk*, given him by the Lord
Corn-

Cornwallis, to whom he was chaplain, and who added the vicarage of *Eye* in *Suffolk*; he then resigned *Pulham*, and retained the other two.

Towards the close of his life he grew again poetical, and amused himself with translating Odes of Anacreon, which he published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, under the name of *Chester*.

He died at Bath, November 16, 1745, and was buried in the Abbey Church.

Of Broome, though it cannot be said that he was a great poet, it would be unjust to deny that he was an excellent versifier; his lines are smooth and sonorous, and his diction is select and elegant. His rhymes are sometimes unsuitable; in his *Melancholy* he makes *breath* rhyme to *birth* in one place, and to *earth* in another. Those faults occur but seldom; and he had such power of words and numbers as fitted him for translation; but in his original works, recollection seems to have been his business more than invention. His imitations are so apparent, that it is part of his reader's employment to recal the verses of some former poet. Sometimes he copies the most popular writers, for he seems scarcely to endeavour at concealment; and sometimes he picks up fragments in obscure corners. His lines to Fenton,

Serene,

Serene, the sting of pain thy thoughts beguile,
And make afflictions objects of a smile;

brought to my mind some lines on the death
of queen Mary, written by Barnes, of whom I
should not have expected to find an imitator;

But thou, O Muse, whose sweet nepenthean
tongue

Can charm the pangs of death with deathless
song;

Canst *stinging plagues* with easy *thoughts beguile*,
Make pains and tortures objects of a smile.

To detect his imitations were tedious and
useless. What he takes he seldom makes worse;
and he cannot be justly thought a mean man
whom Pope chose for an associate, and whose
co-operation was considered by Pope's enemies
as so important, that he was attacked by Hen-
ley with this ludicrous distich:

Pope came off clean with Homer; but they
say

Broome went before, and kindly swept the
way.

P I T T.

CHRISTOPHER PITT, of whom whatever I shall relate, more than has been already published, I owe to the kind communication of Dr. Warton, was born in 1699 at Blandford, the son of a physician much esteemed.

He was, in 1714, received as a scholar into Winchester College, where he was distinguished by exercises of uncommon elegance; and, at his removal to New College in 1719, presented to the electors, as the product of his private and voluntary studies, a compleat version of Lucan's poem, which he did not then know to have been translated by Rowe.

This is an instance of early diligence which well deserves to be recorded. The suppression of such a work, recommended by such uncommon circumstances, is to be regretted. It is indeed culpable, to load libraries with superfluous books; but incitements to early excellence are never superfluous, and from this example the danger is not great of many imitations.

When

When he had resided at his College three years, he was presented to the rectory of Pimper in Dorsetshire (1722), by his relation, Mr. Pitt of Stratfeildsea in Hampshire; and, resigning his fellowship, continued at Oxford two years longer, till he became Master of Arts (1724).

He probably about this time translated *Vida's Art of Poetry*, which Tristram's elegant edition had then made popular. In this translation he distinguished himself, both by its general elegance, and by the skilful adaptation of his numbers to the images expressed; a beauty which Vida has with great ardour enforced and exemplified.

He then retired to his living, a place very pleasing by its situation, and therefore likely to excite the imagination of a poet; where he passed the rest of his life, revered for his virtue, and beloved for the softness of his temper and the easiness of his manners. Before strangers he had something of the scholar's timidity or distrust; but when he became familiar he was in a very high degree chearful and entertaining. His general benevolence procured general respect; and he passed a life placid and honourable, neither too great for the kindness of the low, nor too low for the notice of the great.

At

At what time he composed his Miscellany, published in 1727, it is not easy nor necessary to know: those which have dates appear to have been very early productions, and I have not observed that any rise above mediocrity.

The success of his *Vida* animated him to a higher undertaking; and in his thirtieth year he published a version of the first book of the *Æneid*. This being, I suppose, commended by his friends, he some time afterwards added three or four more; with an advertisement in which he represents himself as translating with great indifference, and with a progress of which himself was hardly conscious.

At last, without any further contention with his modesty, or any awe of the name of Dryden, he gave us a complete English *Eneid*, which I am sorry to see excluded from the new collection of his works. It would have been pleasing to have an opportunity of comparing the two best translations that perhaps were ever produced by one nation of the same author.

Pitt engaging as a rival with Dryden, naturally observed his failures and avoided them; and, as he wrote after Pope's *Iliad*, he had an example of an exact, equable, and splendid versification. With these advantages, seconded by great diligence, he might successfully labour particular passages, and escape many errors.

rors. If the two versions are compared, perhaps the result would be, that Dryden leads the reader forward by his general vigour and sprightliness, and Pitt often stops him to contemplate the excellence of a single couplet; that Dryden's faults are forgotten in the hurry of delight, and that Pitt's beauties are neglected in the languor of a cold and listless perusal; that Pitt pleases the criticks and Dryden the people; that Pitt is quoted, and Dryden read.

He did not long enjoy the reputation which this great work deservedly conferred; for he left the world in 1748, and lies buried under a stone at Blandford, on which is this inscription.

In memory of
CHR. PITT, clerk, M. A.

Very eminent
for his talents in poetry;
and yet more

for the universal candour of
his mind, and the primitive
simplicity of his manners.

He lived innocent,
and died beloved

Apr. 13, 1748,

aged 48.

PARNELL.

THE Life of Dr. PARNELL is a task which I should very willingly decline, since it has been lately written by Goldsmith, a man of such variety of powers, and such felicity of performance, that he always seemed to do best that which he was doing; a man who had the art of being minute without tediousness, and general without confusion; whose language was copious without exuberance, exact without constraint, and easy without weakness.

What such an author has told, who would tell again? I have made an abstract from his larger narrative; and shall have this gratification from my attempt, that it gives me an opportunity of paying due tribute to the memory of a departed genius.

Tò γὰρ γένος ἐστὶ Δανόβλων.

THOMAS PARNELL was the son of a commonwealthsman of the same name, who at the Restoration left Congleton in Cheshire, where the family had been established for several

veral centuries, and, settling in Ireland, purchased an estate, which, with his lands in Cheshire, descended to the poet, who was born at Dublin in 1679; and, after the usual education at a grammar-school, was at the age of thirteen admitted into the College, where, in 1700, he became master of arts; and was the same year ordained a deacon, though under the canonical age, by a dispensation from the bishop of Derry.

About three years afterwards he was made a priest; and in 1705, Dr. Ashe, the bishop of Clogher, conferred upon him the archdeaconry of Clogher. About the same time he married Mrs. Anne Minchin, an amiable lady, by whom he had two sons who died young, and a daughter who long survived him.

At the ejection of the Whigs, in the end of queen Anne's reign, Parnell was persuaded to change his party, not without much censure from those whom he forsook, and was received by the new ministry as a valuable reinforcement. When the earl of Oxford was told that Dr. Parnell waited among the croud in the outer room, he went, by the persuasion of Swift, with his treasurer's staff in his hand, to enquire for him, and to bid him welcome; and, as may be inferred from Pope's dedication, admitted him as a favourite companion to his convivial hours, but, as it seems often to have

have happened in those times to the favourites of the great, without attention to his fortune, which indeed was in no great need of improvement.

Parnell, who did not want ambition or vanity, was desirous to make himself conspicuous, and to shew how worthy he was of high preferment, as he thought himself qualified to become a popular preacher, he displayed his elocution with great success in the pulpits of London; but the Queen's death putting an end to his expectations, abated his diligence: and Pope represents him as falling from that time into intemperance of wine. That in his latter life he was too much a lover of the bottle is not denied; but I have heard it imputed to a cause more likely to obtain forgiveness from mankind, the untimely death of a darling son; or, as others tell, the loss of his wife, who died (1712) in the midst of his expectations.

He was now to derive every future addition to his preferments from his personal interest with his private friends, and he was not long unregarded. He was warmly recommended by Swift to archbishop King, who gave him a prebend in 1713; and in May 1716 presented him to the vicarage of Finglass in the diocese of Dublin, worth four hundred pounds a year. Such notice from such a man, inclines
me

me to believe that the vice of which he has been accused was not gross, or not notorious.

But his prosperity did not last long. His end, whatever was its cause, was now approaching. He enjoyed his preferment little more than a year; for in July 1717, in his thirty-eighth year, he died at Chester, on his way to Ireland.

He seems to have been one of those poets who take delight in writing. He contributed to the papers of that time, and probably published more than he owned. He left many compositions behind him, of which Pope selected those which he thought best, and dedicated them to the earl of Oxford. Of these Goldsmith has given an opinion, and his criticism it is seldom safe to contradict. He bestows just praise upon the *Rise of Woman*, the *Fairy Tale*, and the *Pervigilium Veneris*; but has very properly remarked, that in the *Battle of Mice and Frogs* the Greek names have not in English their original effect.

He tells us, that the *Bookworm* is borrowed from *Beza*; but he should have added, with modern applications: and when he discovers that *Gay Bacchus* is translated from *Augurellus*, he ought to have remarked, that the latter part is purely Parnell's. Another poem, *When Spring comes on*, is, he says, taken from the French.

French. I would add, that the description of *Barrenness*, in his verses to Pope, was borrowed from *Secundus*; but lately searching for the passage which I had formerly read, I could not find it. The *Night-piece on Death* is indirectly preferred by Goldsmith to Gray's *Church-yard*; but, in my opinion, Gray has the advantage in dignity, variety, and originality of sentiment. He observes that the story of the *Hermit* is in *More's Dialogues* and *Howell's Letters*, and supposes it to have been originally *Arabian*.

Goldsmith has not taken any notice of the *Elegy to the old Beauty*, which is perhaps the meanest; nor of the *Allegory on Man*, the happiest of Parnell's performances. The hint of the *Hymn to Contentment* I suspect to have been borrowed from Cleiveland.

The general character of Parnell is not great extent of comprehension, or fertility of mind. of the little that appears still less is his own. His praise must be derived from the easy sweetness of his diction: in his verses there is *more happiness than pains*; he is spritely without effort, and always delights though he never ravishes; every thing is proper, yet every thing seems casual. If there is some appearance of elaboration in the *Hermit*, the narrative, as it is less airy, is less pleasing. Of his other compositions it is impossible to say whether they
are

are the productions of Nature, so excellent as not to want the help of Art, or of Art so refined as to resemble Nature.

This criticism relates only to the pieces published by Pope. Of the large appendages which I find in the new edition, I can only say that I know not whence they came, nor have ever enquired whither they are going. They stand upon the faith of the compilers.



[1]

PHILIPS.

OF the birth or early part of the life of AMBROSE PHILIPS I have not been able to find any account. His academical education he received at St. John's College in Cambridge, where he first solicited the notice of the world by some English verses, in the Collection published by the University on the death of queen Mary.

From this time how he was employed, or in what station he passed his life, is not yet discovered. He must have published his Pastorals before the year 1708, because they are evidently prior to those of Pope.

He afterwards (1709) addressed to the universal patron, the duke of Dorset, a *poetical Letter from Copenhagen*, which was published in the *Tatler*, and is by Pope in one of his first Letters mentioned with high praise, as the production of a man *who could write very nobly*.

Philips was a zealous Whig, and therefore easily found access to Addison and Steele; but

his ardour seems not to have procured him any thing more than kind words; since he was reduced to translate the *Persian Tales* for Tonson, for which he was afterwards reproached, with this addition of contempt, that he worked for half-a-crown. The book is divided into many sections, for each of which if he received half-a-crown, his reward, as writers then were paid, was very liberal; but half-a-crown had a mean sound.

He was employed in promoting the principles of his party, by epitomising Hacket's *Life of Archbishop Williams*. The original book is written with such depravity of genius, such mixture of the fop and pedant, as has not often appeared. The Epitome is free enough from affectation, but has little spirit or vigour.

In 1712 he brought upon the stage *The Distrest Mother*, almost a translation of Racine's *Andromaque*. Such a work requires no uncommon powers; but the friends of Philips exerted every art to promote his interest. Before the appearance of the play a whole *Spectator*, none indeed of the best, was devoted to its praise; while it continued to be acted, another *Spectator* was written, to tell what impression it made upon Sir Roger; and on the first night a select audience, says Pope *, was called together to applaud it.

* Spence.



It was concluded with the most successful Epilogue that was ever yet spoken on the English theatre. The three first nights it was recited twice; and not only continued to be demanded through the run, as it is termed, of the play, but whenever it is recalled to the stage, where by peculiar fortune, though a copy from the French, it yet keeps its place, the Epilogue is still expected, and is still spoken.

The propriety of Epilogues in general, and consequently of this, was questioned by a correspondent of the *Spectator*, whose Letter was undoubtedly admitted for the sake of the Answer, which soon followed, written with much zeal and acrimony. The attack and the defence equally contributed to stimulate curiosity and continue attention. It may be discovered in the defence, that Prior's Epilogue to *Phædra* had a little excited jealousy; and something of Prior's plan may be discovered in the performance of his rival.

Of this distinguished Epilogue the reputed author was the wretched Budgel, whom Addison used to denominate * *the man who calls me cousin*; and when he was asked how such a silly fellow could write so well, replied, *The Epilogue was quite another thing when I saw it first*. It was known in Tonson's family, and told to Garrick, that Addison was himself the author

* Spence.

of it, and that when it had been at first printed with his name, he came early in the morning, before the copies were distributed, and ordered it to be given to Budgel, that it might add weight to the solicitation which he was then making for a place.

Philips was now high in the ranks of literature. His play was applauded; his translations from Sappho had been published in the *Spectator*; he was an important and distinguished associate of clubs witty and political; and nothing was wanting to his happiness, but that he should be sure of its continuance.

The work which had procured him the first notice from the publick was his *Six Pastorals*, which, flattering the imagination with Arcadian scenes, probably found many readers, and might have long passed as a pleasing amusement, had they not been unhappily too much commended.

The rustick Poems of Theocritus were so highly valued by the Greeks and Romans, that they attracted the imitation of Virgil, whose *Eclogues* seem to have been considered as precluding all attempts of the same kind; for no shepherds were taught to sing by any succeeding poet, till Nemesian and Calphurnius ventured their feeble efforts in the lower age of Latin literature.

At

At the revival of learning in Italy, it was soon discovered that a dialogue of imaginary swains might be composed with little difficulty; because the conversation of shepherds excludes profound or refined sentiment; and, for images and descriptions, Satyrs and Fauns, and Naiads and Dryads, were always within call; and woods and meadows, and hills and rivers, supplied variety, which having a natural power to sooth the mind, did not quickly cloy it.

Petrarch entertained the learned men of his age with the novelty of modern Pastorals in Latin. Being not ignorant of Greek, and finding nothing in the word *Eclogue* of rural meaning, he supposed it to be corrupted by the copiers, and therefore called his own productions *Æglogues*, by which he meant to express the talk of goatherds, though it will mean only the talk of goats. This new name was adopted by subsequent writers, and amongst others by our Spenser.

More than a century afterwards (1498) Mantuan published his *Bucolicks* with such success, that they were soon dignified by Badius with a comment, and, as Scaliger complained, received into schools, and taught as classical; his complaint was vain, and the practice, however injudicious, spread far and continued long. Mantuan was read, at least in some of the inferior schools of this kingdom, to the beginning of

of the present century. The speakers of Mantuan carried their disquisitions beyond the country, and censured the corruptions of the Church; and from him Spenser learned to employ his swains on topicks of controverfy.

The Italians soon transferred Pastoral Poetry into their own language: Sannazaro wrote *Arcadia* in prose and verse; Tasso and Guarini wrote *Favole Boschereccie*, or Silvan Dramas; and all nations of Europe filled volumes with *Thyrsis* and *Damon*, and *Thestylis* and *Phyllis*.

Philips thinks it *somewhat strange to conceive how, in an age so addicted to the Muses, pastoral Poetry never comes to be so much as thought upon*. His wonder seems very unseasonable; there had never, from the time of Spenser, wanted writers to talk occasionally of *Arcadia* and *Strephon*; and half the book, in which he first tried his powers, consists of dialogues on queen Mary's death, between *Tityrus* and *Corydon*, or *Mopsus* and *Menalcas*. A series or book of Pastorals, however, I know not that any one had then lately published.

Not long afterwards Pope made the first display of his powers in four Pastorals, written in a very different form. Philips had taken Spenser, and Pope took Virgil for his pattern. Philips

lips endeavoured to be natural, Pope laboured to be elegant.

Philips was now favoured by Addison, and by Addison's companions, who were very willing to push him into reputation. The *Guardian* gave an account of Pastoral, partly critical, and partly historical; in which, when the merit of the moderns is compared, Tasso and Guarini are censured for remote thoughts and unnatural refinements; and, upon the whole, the Italians and French are all excluded from rural poetry, and the pipe of the Pastoral Muse is transmitted by lawful inheritance from Theocritus to Virgil, from Virgil to Spenser, and from Spenser to Philips.

With this inauguration of Philips, his rival Pope was not much delighted; he therefore drew a comparison of Philips's performance with his own, in which, with an unexampled and unequalled artifice of irony, though he has himself always the advantage, he gives the preference to Philips. The design of aggrandising himself he disguised with such dexterity, that, though Addison discovered it, Steele was deceived, and was afraid of displeasing Pope by publishing his paper. Published however it was (*Guard.* 40), and from that time Pope and Philips lived in a perpetual reciprocation of malevolence.

In

In poetical powers, of either praise or satire, there was no proportion between the combatants; but Philips, though he could not prevail by wit, hoped to hurt Pope with another weapon, and charged him, as Pope thought, with Addison's approbation, as disaffected to the government.

Even with this he was not satisfied; for, indeed, there is no appearance that any regard was paid to his clamours. He proceeded to grosser insults, and hung up a rod at Button's, with which he threatened to chastise Pope, who appears to have been extremely exasperated; for in the first edition of his Letters he calls Philips *rascal*, and in the last still charges him with detaining in his hands the subscriptions delivered to him by the Hanover Club.

I suppose it was never suspected that he meant to appropriate the money; he only delayed, and with sufficient meanness, the gratification of him by whose prosperity he was pained.

Men sometimes suffer by injudicious kindness; Philips became ridiculous, without his own fault, by the absurd admiration of his friends, who decorated him with honorary garlands which the first breath of contradiction blasted.

When

When upon the succession of the House of Hanover every Whig expected to be happy, Philips seems to have obtained too little notice; he caught few drops of the golden shower, though he did not omit what flattery could perform. He was only made a Commissioner of the Lottery (1717), and, what did not much elevate his character, a Justice of the Peace.

The success of his first play must naturally dispose him to turn his hopes towards the stage: he did not however soon commit himself to the mercy of an audience, but contented himself with the fame already acquired, till after nine years he produced (1721) *The Briton*, a tragedy which, whatever was its reception, is now neglected; though one of the scenes, between *Vanoc* the British Prince and *Valens* the Roman General, is confessed to be written with great dramatick skill, animated by spirit truly poetical.

He had not been idle, though he had been silent; for he exhibited another tragedy the same year, on the story of *Humbry Duke of Gloucester*. This tragedy is only remembered by its title.

His happiest undertaking was of a paper called *The Freethinker*, in conjunction with associates, of whom one was Dr. Boulter, who, then

then only minister of a parish in Southwark, was of so much consequence to the government, that he was made first bishop of Bristol, and afterwards primate of Ireland, where his piety and his charity will be long honoured.

It may easily be imagined that what was printed under the direction of Boulter would have nothing in it indecent or licentious; its title is to be understood as implying only freedom from unreasonable prejudice. It has been reprinted in volumes, but is little read; nor can impartial criticism recommend it as worthy of revival.

Boulter was not well qualified to write diurnal essays; but he knew how to practise the liberality of greatness and the fidelity of friendship. When he was advanced to the height of ecclesiastical dignity, he did not forget the companion of his labours. Knowing Philips to be slenderly supported, he took him to Ireland, as partaker of his fortune; and, making him his secretary, added such preferments as enabled him to represent the county of Armagh in the Irish Parliament.

In December 1726 he was made secretary to the Lord Chancellor; and in August 1733 became judge of the Prerogative Court.

After

After the death of his patron he continued some years in Ireland; but at last longing, as it seems, for his native country, he returned (1748) to London, having doubtless survived most of his friends and enemies, and among them his dreaded antagonist Pope. He found however the duke of Newcastle still living, and to him he dedicated his poems collected into a volume.

Having purchased an annuity of four hundred pounds, he now certainly hoped to pass some years of life in plenty and tranquillity; but his hope deceived him: he was struck with a palsy, and died June 18, 1749, in his seventy-eight year.

Of his personal character all that I have heard is, that he was eminent for bravery and skill in the sword, and that in conversation he was solemn and pompous. He had great sensibility of censure, if judgment may be made by a single story which I heard long ago from Mr. Ing, a gentleman of great eminence in Staffordshire. "Philips," said he, "was once at table, when I asked him, How came thy king of Epirus to drive oxen, and to say *I'm goaded on by love?* After which question he never spoke again."

Of the *Distrest Mother* not much is pretended to be his own, and therefore it is no subject
of

of criticism; his other two tragedies, I believe, are not below mediocrity, nor above it. Among the Poems comprised in this collection, the *Letter from Denmark* may be justly praised; the Pastorals, which by the writer of the *Guardian* were ranked as one of the four genuine productions of the rustick Muse, cannot surely be despicable. That they exhibit a mode of life which does not exist, nor ever existed, is not to be objected; the supposition of such a state is allowed to Pastoral. In his other poems he cannot be denied the praise of lines sometimes elegant, but he has seldom much force, or much comprehension. The pieces that please best are those which, from Pope and Pope's adherents, procured him the name of *Namby Pamby*, the poems of short lines, by which he paid his court to all ages and characters, from Walpole the *steerer of the realm* to Miss Pulteney in the nursery; the numbers are smooth and spritely, and the diction is seldom faulty. They are not loaded with much thought, yet if they had been written by Addison they would have had admirers; little things are not valued but when they are done by those who can do greater.

In his translations from Pindar he found the art of reaching all the obscurity of the Theban bard, however he may fall below his sublimity;

mity; he will be allowed, if he has less fire, to have more smoke.

He has added nothing to English poetry, yet at least half his book deserves to be read: perhaps he valued most himself that part, which the critick would reject.

only; it will be allowed, if it has less than
no more than.

He has added nothing to English poetry, yet at least had his book deserved to be read: perhaps he valued more himself than his work, which the critics would reject.

W A T T S.

THE Poems of Dr. WATTS were by my recommendation inserted in this Collection; the readers of which are to impute to me whatever pleasure or weariness they may find in the perusal of Blackmore, Watts, Pomfret, and Yalden.

ISAAC WATTS was born July 17, 1674, at Southampton, where his father, of the same name, kept a boarding-school for young gentlemen, though common report makes him a shoemaker. He appears, from the narrative of Dr. Gibbons, to have been neither indigent nor illiterate.

Isaac, the eldest of nine children, was given to books from his infancy; and began, we are told, to learn Latin when he was four years old, I suppose, at home. He was afterwards taught Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, by Mr. Pinhorne, a clergyman, master of the Free-school at Southampton, to whom the
gratitude

gratitude of his scholar afterwards inscribed a Latin ode.

His proficiency at school was so conspicuous, that a subscription was proposed for his support at the University; but he declared his resolution to take his lot with the Dissenters. Such he was as every Christian Church would rejoice to have adopted.

He therefore repaired in 1690 to an academy taught by Mr. Rowe, where he had for his companions and fellow-students Mr. Hughes the poet, and Dr. Hort, afterwards archbishop of Tuam. Some Latin Essays, supposed to have been written as exercises at this academy, shew a degree of knowledge, both philosophical and theological, such as very few attain by a much longer course of study.

He was, as he hints in his Miscellanies, a maker of verses from fifteen to fifty; and in his youth he appears to have paid attention to Latin poetry. His verses to his brother, in the *glyconick* measure, written when he was seventeen, are remarkably easy and elegant. Some of his other odes are deformed by the Pindarick folly then prevailing, and are written with such neglect of all metrical rules as is without example among the ancients; but his diction, though perhaps not always exactly pure, has such copiousness and splendour as
shews

shews that he was but at a very little distance from excellence.

His method of study was to impress the contents of his books upon his memory by abridging them, and by interleaving them to amplify one system with supplements from another.

With the congregation of his tutor Mr. Rowe, who were, I believe, Independents, he communicated in his nineteenth year.

At the age of twenty he left the academy, and spent two years in study and devotion at the house of his father, who treated him with great tenderness; and had the happiness, indulged to few parents, of living to see his son eminent for literature and venerable for piety.

He was then entertained by Sir John Hartop five years, as domestick tutor to his son, and in that time particularly devoted himself to the study of the Holy Scriptures; and being chosen assistant to Dr. Chauncey, preached the first time on the birth-day that compleated his twenty-fourth year; probably considering that as the day of a second nativity, by which he entered on a new period of existence.

In about three years he succeeded Dr. Chauncey; but, soon after his entrance on his

charge, he was seized by a dangerous illness, which sunk him to such weakness, that the congregation thought an assistant necessary, and appointed Mr. Price. His health then returned gradually, and he performed his duty, till (1712) he was seized by a fever of such violence and continuance, that, from the feebleness which it brought upon him, he never perfectly recovered.

This calamitous state made the compassion of his friends necessary, and drew upon him the attention of Sir Thomas Abney, who received him into his house; where, with a constancy of friendship and uniformity of conduct not often to be found, he was treated for thirty-six years with all the kindness that friendship could prompt, and all the attention that respect could dictate. Sir Thomas died about eight years afterwards; but he continued with the lady and her daughters to the end of his life. The lady died about a year after him.

A coalition like this, a state in which the notions of patronage and dependence were overpowered by the perception of reciprocal benefits, deserves a particular memorial; and I will not withhold from the reader Dr. Gibbons' representation, to which regard is to be paid as to the narrative of one who writes what he knows, and what is known likewise to multitudes besides.

Our

“ Our next observation shall be made up-
“ on that remarkably kind Providence which
“ brought the Doctor into Sir Thomas Ab-
“ ney’s family, and continued him there till
“ his death, a period of no less than thirty-
“ six years. In the midst of his sacred la-
“ bours for the glory of God, and good of
“ his generation, he is seized with a most
“ violent and threatening fever, which leaves
“ him oppressed with great weakness, and
“ puts a stop at least to his publick services
“ for four years. In this distressing season,
“ doubly so to his active and pious spirit, he
“ is invited to Sir Thomas Abney’s family,
“ nor ever removes from it till he had finished
“ his days. Here he enjoyed the uninter-
“ rupted demonstrations of the truest friend-
“ ship. Here, without any care of his own,
“ he had every thing which could contribute
“ to the enjoyment of life, and favour the
“ unwearied pursuit of his studies. Here he
“ dwelt in a family, which, for piety, order,
“ harmony, and every virtue, was an house
“ of God. Here he had the privilege of a
“ country recess, the fragrant bower, the
“ spreading lawn, the flowery garden, and
“ other advantages, to sooth his mind and aid
“ his restoration to health; to yield him, when-
“ ever he chose them, most grateful intervals
“ from his laborious studies, and enable him to
“ return to them with redoubled vigour and
“ delight. Had it not been for this most
C 2 “ happy

“ happy event, he might, as to outward view,
“ have feebly, it may be painfully, dragged
“ on through many more years of languor,
“ and inability for public service, and even for
“ profitable study, or perhaps might have sunk
“ into his grave under the overwhelming load
“ of infirmities in the midst of his days; and
“ thus the church and world would have been
“ deprived of those many excellent sermons
“ and works, which he drew up and published
“ during his long residence in this family. In
“ a few years after his coming hither, Sir Tho-
“ mas Abney dies; but his amiable consort
“ survives, who shews the Doctor the same
“ respect and friendship as before, and most
“ happily for him and great numbers besides;
“ for, as her riches were great, her generosity
“ and munificence were in full proportion;
“ her thread of life was drawn out to a great
“ age, even beyond that of the Doctor’s; and
“ thus this excellent man, through her kind-
“ ness, and that of her daughter the present
“ Mrs. Elizabeth Abney, who in a like degree
“ esteemed and honoured him, enjoyed all the
“ benefits and felicities, he experienced at his
“ first entrance into this family, till his days
“ were numbered and finished, and like a
“ shock of corn in its season, he ascended into
“ the regions of perfect and immortal life
“ and joy.”

If

If this quotation has appeared long, let it be considered that it comprises an account of six-and-thirty years, and those the years of Dr. Watts.

From the time of his reception into this family, his life was no otherwise diversified than by successive publications. The series of his works I am not able to deduce; their number, and their variety, shew the intenseness of his industry, and the extent of his capacity.

He was one of the first authors that taught the Dissenters to court attention by the graces of language. Whatever they had among them before, whether of learning or acuteness, was commonly obscured and blunted by coarseness and inelegance of style. He shewed them, that zeal and purity might be expressed and enforced by polished diction.

He continued to the end of his life the teacher of a congregation, and no reader of his works can doubt his fidelity or diligence. In the pulpit, though his low stature, which very little exceeded five feet, graced him with no advantages of appearance, yet the gravity and propriety of his utterance made his discourses very efficacious. I once mentioned the reputation which Mr. Foster had gained by his proper delivery to my friend Dr. Hawkesworth, who told me, that in the

art of pronunciation, he was far inferior to Dr. Watts.

Such was his flow of thoughts, and such his promptitude of language, that in the latter part of his life he did not precompose his curatory sermons; but having adjusted the heads, and sketched out some particulars, trusted for success to his extemporary powers.

He did not endeavour to assist his eloquence by any gesticulations; for, as no corporeal actions have any correspondence with theological truth, he did not see how they could enforce it.

At the conclusion of weighty sentences he gave time, by a short pause, for the proper impression.

To stated and publick instruction he added familiar visits and personal application, and was careful to improve the opportunities which conversation offered of diffusing and increasing the influence of religion.

By his natural temper he was quick of resentment; but, by his established and habitual practice, he was gentle, modest, and inoffensive. His tenderness appeared in his attention to children, and to the poor. To the poor, while he lived in the family of his friend, he allowed

the

the third part of his annual revenue; and for children, he condescended to lay aside the scholar, the philosopher, and the wit, to write little poems of devotion, and systems of instruction, adapted to their wants and capacities, from the dawn of reason through its gradations of advance in the morning of life. Every man, acquainted with the common principles of human action, will look with veneration on the writer who is at one time combating Locke, and at another making a catechism for children in their fourth year. A voluntary descent from the dignity of science is perhaps the hardest lesson that humility can teach.

As his mind was capacious, his curiosity excursive, and his industry continual, his writings are very numerous, and his subjects various. With his theological works I am only enough acquainted to admire the meekness of his opposition, and the mildness of his censures. It was not only in his book but in his mind that *orthodoxy* was united with *charity*.

Of his philosophical pieces, his *Logick* has been received into the universities, and therefore wants no private recommendation: if he owes part of it to Le Clerc, it must be considered that no man who undertakes merely to methodise or illustrate a system, pretends to be its author.

In

In his metaphysical disquisitions, it was observed by the late learned Mr. Dyer, that he confounded the idea of *space* with that of *empty space*, and did not consider that though space might be without matter, yet matter being extended, could not be without space.

Few books have been perused by me with greater pleasure than his *Improvement of the Mind*, of which the radical principles may indeed be found in Locke's *Conduct of the Understanding*, but they are so expanded and ramified by Watts, as to confer upon him the merit of a work in the highest degree useful and pleasing. Whoever has the care of instructing others, may be charged with deficiency in his duty if this book is not recommended.

I have mentioned his treatises of Theology as distinct from his other productions; but the truth is, that whatever he took in hand was, by his incessant solicitude for souls, converted to Theology. As piety predominated in his mind, it is diffused over his works: under his direction it may be truly said, *Theologia Philosophia ancillatur*, philosophy is subservient to evangelical instruction; it is difficult to read a page without learning, or at least wishing, to be better. The attention is caught by indirect instruction, and he that sat down only to reason is on a sudden compelled to pray.

It

It was therefore with great propriety that, in 1728, he received from Edinburgh and Aberdeen an unsolicited diploma, by which he became a Doctor of Divinity. Academical honours would have more value, if they were always bestowed with equal judgment.

He continued many years to study and to preach, and to do good by his instruction and example; till at last the infirmities of age disabled him from the more laborious part of his ministerial functions, and, being no longer capable of public duty, he offered to remit the salary appendant to it; but his congregation would not accept the resignation.

By degrees his weakness increased, and at last confined him to his chamber and his bed; where he was worn gradually away without pain till he expired Nov. 25, 1748, in the seventy-fifth year of his age.

Few men have left behind such purity of character, or such monuments of laborious piety. He has provided instruction for all ages, from those who are lisping their first lessons, to the enlightened readers of Malbranche and Locke; he has left neither corporeal nor spiritual nature unexamined; he has taught the art of reasoning, and the science of the stars.

His

His character, therefore, must be formed from the multiplicity and diversity of his attainments rather than from any single performance; for it would not be safe to claim for him the highest rank in any single denomination of literary dignity; yet perhaps there was nothing in which he would not have excelled, if he had not divided his powers to different pursuits.

probably As a poet, had he been only a poet, he would probably have stood high among the authors with whom he is now associated. For his judgement was exact, and he noted beauties and faults with very nice discernment; his imagination, as the *Dacian Battle* proves, was vigorous and active, and the stores of knowledge were large by which his imagination was to be supplied. His ear was well-tuned, and his diction was elegant and copious. But his devotional poetry is, like that of others, unsatisfactory. The paucity of its topics enforces perpetual repetition, and the sanctity of the matter rejects the ornaments of figurative diction. It is sufficient for Watts to have done better than others what no man has done well.

His poems on other subjects seldom rise higher than might be expected from the amusements of a Man of Letters, and have different degrees of value as they are more or less laboured,

laboured, or as the occasion was more or less favourable to invention.

He writes too often without regular measures, and too often in blank verse; the rhymes are not always sufficiently correspondent. He is particularly unhappy in coining names expressive of characters. His lines are commonly smooth and easy, and his thoughts always religiously pure; but who is there that, to so much piety and innocence, does not wish for a greater measure of spriteliness and vigour? But he is at least one of the few poets with whom youth and ignorance may be safely pleased; and happy will be that reader whose mind is disposed by his verses, or his prose, to imitate him in all but his non-conformity, to copy his benevolence to man, and his reverence to God.

S A V A G E.

IT has been observed in all ages, that the advantages of nature or of fortune have contributed very little to the promotion of happiness; and that those whom the splendor of their rank, or the extent of their capacity, have placed upon the summits of human life, have not often given any just occasion to envy in those who look up to them from a lower station. Whether it be that apparent superiority incites great designs, and great designs are naturally liable to fatal miscarriages; or that the general lot of mankind is misery, and the misfortunes of those whose eminence drew upon them an universal attention, have been more carefully recorded, because they were more generally observed, and have in reality been only more conspicuous than those of others, not more frequent, or more severe.

That affluence and power, advantages extrinsic and adventitious, and therefore easily separable from those by whom they are possessed, should very often flatter the mind with expectations

expectations of felicity which they cannot give, raises no astonishment; but it seems rational to hope, that intellectual greatness should produce better effects; that minds qualified for great attainments should first endeavour their own benefit; and that they who are most able to teach others the way to happiness, should with most certainty follow it themselves.

But this expectation, however plausible, has been very frequently disappointed. The heroes of literary as well as civil history have been very often no less remarkable for what they have achieved; and volumes have been written only to enumerate the miseries of the learned, and relate their unhappy lives, and untimely deaths.

To these mournful narratives, I am about to add the Life of Richard Savage, a man whose writings intitle him to an eminent rank in the classes of learning, and whose misfortunes claim a degree of compassion, not always due to the unhappy, as they were often the consequences of the crimes of others, rather than his own.

In the year 1697, Anne Countess of Macclesfield, having lived for some time upon very uneasy terms with her husband, thought a public confession of adultery the most obvious and

and expeditious method of obtaining her liberty; and therefore declared, that the child, with which she was then great, was begotten by the Earl Rivers. This, as may be easily imagined, made her husband no less desirous of a separation than herself, and he prosecuted his design in the most effectual manner; for he applied not to the ecclesiastical courts for a divorce, but to the parliament for an act, by which his marriage might be dissolved, the nuptial contract totally annulled, and the children of his wife illegitimated. This act, after the usual deliberation, he obtained, though without the approbation of some, who considered marriage as an affair only cognizable by ecclesiastical judges*; and on March 3d was separated from his wife, whose fortune, which was very great, was repaid her; and who having, as well as her husband, the liberty of making another choice, was in a short time married to Colonel Bret.

* This year was made remarkable by the dissolution of a marriage solemnized in the face of the church. SALMON'S REVIEW.

The following protest is registered in the books of the House of Lords.

Dissentient.

Because we conceive that this is the first bill of that nature that hath passed, where there was not a divorce first obtained in the Spiritual Court; which we look upon as an ill precedent, and may be of dangerous consequence in the future.

HALIFAX.

ROCHESTER.

While

While the Earl of Macclesfield was prosecuting this affair, his wife was, on the 10th of January 1697-8, delivered of a son, and the Earl Rivers, by appearing to consider him as his own, left none any reason to doubt of the sincerity of her declaration; for he was his godfather, and gave him his own name, which was by his direction inserted in the register of St. Andrew's parish in Holborn, but unfortunately left him to the care of his mother, whom, as she was now set free from her husband, he probably imagined likely to treat with great tenderness the child that had contributed to so pleasing an event. It is not indeed easy to discover what motives could be found to overbalance that natural affection of a parent, or what interest could be promoted by neglect or cruelty. The dread of shame or of poverty, by which some wretches have been incited to abandon or to murder their children, cannot be supposed to have affected a woman who had proclaimed her crimes and solicited reproach; and on whom the clemency of the legislature had undeservedly bestowed a fortune, which would have been very little diminished by the expences which the care of her child could have brought upon her. It was therefore not likely that she would be wicked without temptation, that she would look upon her son from his birth with a kind of resentment and abhorrence; and, instead of supporting,
assisting,

assisting, and defending him, delight to see him struggling with misery, or that she would take every opportunity of aggravating his misfortunes, and obstructing his resources, and with an implacable and restless cruelty continue her persecution from the first hour of his life to the last.

But whatever were her motives, no sooner was her son born, than she discovered a resolution of disowning him; and in a very short time removed him from her sight, by committing him to the care of a poor woman, whom she directed to educate him as her own, and enjoined never to inform him of his true parents.

Such was the beginning of the life of Richard Savage. Born with a legal claim to honour and to affluence, he was in two months illegitimated by the parliament, and disowned by his mother, doomed to poverty and obscurity, and launched upon the ocean of life, only that he might be swallowed by its quicksands, or dashed upon its rocks.

His mother could not indeed infect others with the same cruelty. As it was impossible to avoid the inquiries which the curiosity or tenderness of her relations made after her child, she was obliged to give some account of

the measures that she had taken; and her mother, the Lady Mason, whether in approbation of her design, or to prevent more criminal contrivances, engaged to transact with the nurse, to pay her for her care, and to superintend the education of the child.

In this charitable office she was assisted by his godmother Mrs. Lloyd, who, while she lived, always looked upon him with that tenderness, which the barbarity of his mother made peculiarly necessary; but her death, which happened in his tenth year, was another of the misfortunes of his childhood; for though she kindly endeavoured to alleviate his loss by a legacy of three hundred pounds, yet, as he had none to prosecute his claim, to shelter him from oppression, or call-in law to the assistance of justice, her will was eluded by the executors, and no part of the money was ever paid.

He was, however, not yet wholly abandoned. The Lady Mason still continued her care, and directed him to be placed at a small grammar-school near St. Alban's, where he was called by the name of his nurse, without the least intimation that he had a claim to any other.

Here

Here he was initiated in literature, and passed through several of the classes, with what rapidity or what applause cannot now be known. As he always spoke with respect of his master, it is probable that the mean rank, in which he then appeared, did not hinder his genius from being distinguished, or his industry from being rewarded; and if in so low a state he obtained distinction and rewards, it is not likely that they were gained but by genius and industry.

It is very reasonable to conjecture, that his application was equal to his abilities, because his improvement was more than proportioned to the opportunities which he enjoyed; nor can it be doubted, that if his earliest productions had been preserved, like those of happier students, we might in some have found vigorous sallies of that sprightly humour, which distinguishes *THE AUTHOR TO BE LET*, and in others strong touches of that ardent imagination which painted the solemn scenes of *THE WANDERER*.

While he was thus cultivating his genius, his father the Earl Rivers was seized with a distemper, which in a short time put an end to his life. He had frequently inquired after his son, and had always been amused with fallacious and evasive answers; but, being now in his own

opinion on his death-bed, he thought it his duty to provide for him among his other natural children, and therefore demanded a positive account of him, with an importunity not to be diverted or denied. His mother, who could no longer refuse an answer, determined at least to give such as should cut him off for ever from that happiness which competence affords, and therefore declared that he was dead; which is perhaps the first instance of a lye invented by a mother to deprive her son of a provision which was designed him by another, and which she could not expect herself, though he should lose it.

This was therefore an act of wickedness which could not be defeated, because it could not be suspected; the Earl did not imagine that there could exist in a human form a mother that would ruin her son without enriching herself, and therefore bestowed upon some other person six thousand pounds, which he had in his will bequeathed to Savage.

The same cruelty which incited his mother to intercept this provision which had been intended him, prompted her in a short time to another project, a project worthy of such a disposition. She endeavoured to rid herself from the danger of being at any time made known

known to him, by sending him secretly to the American plantations *.

By whose kindness this scheme was counter-acted, or by what interposition she was induced to lay aside her design, I know not; it is not improbable that the Lady Mason might persuade or compel her to desist, or perhaps she could not easily find accomplices wicked enough to concur in so cruel an action; for it may be conceived, that those who had by a long gradation of guilt hardened their hearts against the sense of common wickedness, would yet be shocked at the design of a mother to expose her son to slavery and want, to expose him without interest, and without provocation; and Savage might on this occasion find protectors and advocates among those who had long traded in crimes, and whom compassion had never touched before,

Being hindered, by whatever means, from banishing him into another country, she formed soon after a scheme for burying him in poverty and obscurity in his own; and, that his station of life, if not the place of his residence, might keep him for ever at a distance from her, she ordered him to be placed with a shoemaker in Holborn, that, after the usual

† Savage's Preface to his Miscellanies.

time of trial, he might become his apprentice *.

It is generally reported, that this project was for some time successful, and that Savage was employed at the awl longer than he was willing to confess; nor was it perhaps any great advantage to him, that an unexpected discovery determined him to quit his occupation.

About this time his nurse, who had always treated him as her own son, died; and it was natural for him to take care of those effects, which by her death were, as he imagined, become his own; he therefore went to her house, opened her boxes, and examined her papers, among which he found some letters written to her by the Lady Mason, which informed him of his birth, and the reasons for which it was concealed.

He was now no longer satisfied with the employment which had been allotted him, but thought he had a right to share the affluence of his mother; and therefore without scruple applied to her as her son, and made use of every art to awaken her tenderness, and attract her regard. But neither his let-

* Preface to Savage's Miscellanies.

ters, nor the interposition of those friends which his merit or his distress procured him, made any impression upon her mind: She still resolved to neglect, though she could no longer disown him.

It was to no purpose that he frequently solicited her to admit him to see her; she avoided him with the most vigilant precaution, and ordered him to be excluded from her house, by whomsoever he might be introduced, and what reason soever he might give for entering it.

Savage was at the same time so touched with the discovery of his real mother, that it was his frequent practice to walk in the dark evenings * for several hours before her door, in hopes of seeing her as she might come by accident to the window, or cross her apartment with a candle in her hand.

But all his assiduity and tenderness were without effect, for he could neither soften her heart, nor open her hand, and was reduced to the utmost miseries of want, while he was endeavouring to awaken the affection of a mother: He was therefore obliged to seek some other means of support; and, having no profession, became by necessity an author.

* See the PLAIN DEALER.

At this time the attention of all the literary world was engrossed by the Bangorian controversy, which filled the press with pamphlets, and the coffee-houses with disputants. Of this subject, as most popular, he made choice for his first attempt, and without any other knowledge of the question, than he had casually collected from conversation, published a poem against the bishop.

What was the success or merit of this performance, I know not; it was probably lost among the innumerable pamphlets to which that dispute gave occasion. Mr. Savage was himself in a little time ashamed of it, and endeavoured to suppress it, by destroying all the copies that he could collect.

He then attempted a more gainful kind of writing *, and in his eighteenth year offered to the stage a comedy borrowed from a Spanish plot, which was refused by the players, and was therefore given by him to Mr. Bullock, who, having more interest, made some slight alterations, and brought it upon the stage, under the title of † WOMAN'S A RIDDLE, but allowed the unhappy author no part of the profit.

* Jacob's Lives of Dramatic Poets.

† This play was printed first in 8vo; and afterwards in 12mo, the fifth edition.

Not discouraged however at his repulse, he wrote two years afterwards *LOVE IN A VEIL*, another comedy, borrowed likewise from the Spanish, but with little better success than before; for though it was received and acted, yet it appeared so late in the year, that the author obtained no other advantage from it, than the acquaintance of Sir Richard Steele, and Mr. Wilks; by whom he was pitied, caressed, and relieved.

Sir Richard Steele, having declared in his favour with all the ardour of benevolence which constituted his character, promoted his interest with the utmost zeal, related his misfortunes, applauded his merit, took all the opportunities of recommending him, and asserted, that †“the
“inhumanity of his mother had given him a
“right to find every good man his father.”

Nor was Mr. Savage admitted to his acquaintance only, but to his confidence, of which he sometimes related an instance too extraordinary to be omitted, as it affords a very just idea of his patron's character.

He was once desired by Sir Richard, with an air of the utmost importance, to come very early to his house the next morning. Mr. Savage

† PLAIN DEALER.

came as he had promised, found the chariot at the door, and Sir Richard waiting for him, and ready to go out. What was intended, and whither they were to go, Savage could not conjecture, and was not willing to enquire; but immediately seated himself with Sir Richard; the coachman was ordered to drive, and they hurried with the utmost expedition to Hyde-Park Corner, where they stopped at a petty tavern, and retired to a private room. Sir Richard then informed him, that he intended to publish a pamphlet, and that he had desired him to come thither that he might write for him. They soon sat down to the work. Sir Richard dictated, and Savage wrote, till the dinner that had been ordered was put upon the table. Savage was surprized at the meanness of the entertainment, and after some hesitation ventured to ask for wine, which Sir Richard, not without reluctance, ordered to be brought. They then finished their dinner, and proceeded in their pamphlet, which they concluded in the afternoon.

Mr. Savage then imagined his task over, and expected that Sir Richard would call for the reckoning, and return home; but his expectations deceived him, for Sir Richard told him, that he was without money, and that the pamphlet must be sold before the dinner could be paid for; and Savage was therefore obliged to go
and

and offer their new production to sale for two guineas, which with some difficulty he obtained. Sir Richard then returned home, having retired that day only to avoid his creditors, and composed the pamphlet only to discharge his reckoning.

Mr. Savage related another fact equally uncommon, which, though it has no relation to his life, ought to be preserved. Sir Richard Steele having one day invited to his house a great number of persons of the first quality, they were surprized at the number of liveries which surrounded the table; and after dinner, when wine and mirth had set them free from the observation of rigid ceremony, one of them enquired of Sir Richard, how such an expensive train of domestics could be consistent with his fortune. Sir Richard very frankly confessed, that they were fellows of whom he would very willingly be rid. And being then asked, why he did not discharge them, declared that they were bailiffs who had introduced themselves with an execution, and whom, since he could not send them away, he had thought it convenient to embellish with liveries, that they might do him credit while they staid.

His friends were diverted with the expedient, and, by paying the debt, discharged their attendance, having obliged Sir Richard to promise
that

that they should never again find him graced with a retinue of the same kind.

Under such a tutor, Mr. Savage was not likely to learn prudence or frugality; and perhaps many of the misfortunes, which the want of those virtues brought upon him in the following parts of his life, might be justly imputed to so unimproving an example.

Nor did the kindness of Sir Richard end in common favours. He proposed to have established him in some settled scheme of life, and to have contracted a kind of alliance with him, by marrying him to a natural daughter, on whom he intended to bestow a thousand pounds. But though he was always lavish of future bounties, he conducted his affairs in such a manner, that he was very seldom able to keep his promises, or execute his own intentions; and, as he was never able to raise the sum which he had offered, the marriage was delayed. In the mean time he was officiously informed, that Mr. Savage had ridiculed him; by which he was so much exasperated, that he withdrew the allowance which he had paid him, and never afterwards admitted him to his house.

It is not indeed unlikely that Savage might, by his imprudence, expose himself to the malice

lice of a tale-bearer; for his patron had many follies, which as his discernment easily discovered, his imagination might sometimes incite him to mention too ludicrously. A little knowledge of the world is sufficient to discover that such weakness is very common, and that there are few who do not sometimes, in the wantonness of thoughtless mirth, or the heat of transient resentment, speak of their friends and benefactors with levity and contempt, though in their cooler moments they want neither sense of their kindness, nor reverence for their virtue. The fault therefore of Mr. Savage was rather negligence than ingratitude; but Sir Richard must likewise be acquitted of severity, for who is there that can patiently bear contempt from one whom he has relieved and supported, whose establishment he has laboured, and whose interest he has promoted?

He was now again abandoned to fortune, without any other friend than Mr. Wilks; a man, who, whatever were his abilities or skill as an actor, deserves at least to be remembered for his virtues*, which are not often to be found

* As it is a loss to mankind when any good action is forgotten, I shall insert another instance of Mr. Wilks's generosity, very little known. Mr. Smith, a gentleman educated at Dublin, being hindered by an impediment in his pronunciation from engaging in orders, for which his friends designed him, left his own country, and came to London in quest of employment, but found his solici-
citations

found in the world, and perhaps less often in his profession than in others. To be humane, generous, and candid, is a very high degree of merit in any case; but those qualities deserve still greater praise, when they are found in that condition, which makes almost every other man, for whatever reason, contemptuous, insolent, petulant, selfish, and brutal.

As Mr. Wilks was one of those to whom calamity seldom complained without relief, he naturally took an unfortunate wit into his protection, and not only assisted him in any casual distresses, but continued an equal and steady kindness to the time of his death.

By his interposition Mr. Savage once obtained from his mother * fifty pounds, and a pro-

pitutions fruitless, and his necessities every day more pressing. In this distress he wrote a tragedy, and offered it to the players, by whom it was rejected. Thus were his last hopes defeated, and he had no other prospect than of the most deplorable poverty. But Mr. Wilks thought his performance, though not perfect, at least worthy of some reward, and therefore offered him a benefit. This favour he improved with so much diligence, that the house afforded him a considerable sum, with which he went to Leyden, applied himself to the study of physic; and prosecuted his design with so much diligence and success, that, when Dr. Boerhaave was desired by the Czarina to recommend proper persons to introduce into Russia the practice and study of physic, Dr. Smith was one of those whom he selected. He had a considerable pension settled on him at his arrival, and was one of the chief physicians at the Russian court.

* This I write upon the credit of the author of his life, which was published 1727.

mise of one hundred and fifty more; but it was the fate of this unhappy man, that few promises of any advantage to him were performed. His mother was infected among others with the general madness of the South Sea traffic; and, having been disappointed in her expectations, refused to pay what perhaps nothing but the prospect of sudden affluence prompted her to promise.

Being thus obliged to depend upon the friendship of Mr. Wilks, he was consequently an assiduous frequenter of the theatres; and in a short time the amusements of the stage took such possession of his mind, that he never was absent from a play in several years.

This constant attendance naturally procured him the acquaintance of the players, and, among others, of Mrs. Oldfield, who was so much pleased with his conversation, and touched with his misfortunes, that she allowed him a settled pension of fifty pounds a year, which was during her life regularly paid.

That this act of generosity may receive its due praise, and that the good actions of Mrs. Oldfield may not be sullied by her general character, it is proper to mention what Mr. Savage often declared in the strongest terms, that he
never

never saw her alone, or in any other place than behind the scenes.

At her death he endeavoured to shew his gratitude in the most decent manner, by wearing mourning as for a mother; but did not celebrate her in elegies, because he knew that too great profusion of praise would only have revived those faults which his natural equity did not allow him to think less, because they were committed by one who favoured him; but of which, though his virtue would not endeavour to palliate them, his gratitude would not suffer him to prolong the memory, or diffuse the censure.

In his WANDERER, he has indeed taken an opportunity of mentioning her, but celebrates her not for her virtue, but her beauty, an excellence which none ever denied her: this is the only encomium with which he has rewarded her liberality, and perhaps he has even in this been too lavish of his praise. He seems to have thought, that never to mention his benefactress would have an appearance of ingratitude, though to have dedicated any particular performance to her memory would have only betrayed an officious partiality, that, without exalting her character, would have depressed his own.

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He had sometimes, by the kindness of Mr. Wilks, the advantage of a benefit, on which occasions he often received uncommon marks of regard and compassion; and was once told by the Duke of Dorset, that it was just to consider him as an injured nobleman, and that in his opinion the nobility ought to think themselves obliged, without solicitation, to take every opportunity of supporting him by their countenance and patronage. But he had generally the mortification to hear that the whole interest of his mother was employed to frustrate his applications, and that she never left any expedient untried, by which he might be cut off from the possibility of supporting life. The same disposition she endeavoured to diffuse among all those over whom nature or fortune gave her any influence, and indeed succeeded too well in her design; but could not always propagate her effrontery with her cruelty, for some of those, whom she incited against him, were ashamed of their own conduct, and boasted of that relief which they never gave him.

In this censure I do not indiscriminately involve all his relations; for he has mentioned with gratitude the humanity of one Lady, whose name I am now unable to recollect, and to whom therefore I cannot pay the praises

which she deserves for having acted well in opposition to influence, precept, and example.

The punishment which our laws inflict upon those parents who murder their infants is well known, nor has its justice ever been contested; but if they deserve death, who destroy a child in its birth, what pains can be severe enough for her who forbears to destroy him only to inflict sharper miseries upon him; who prolongs his life only to make it miserable; and who exposes him, without care and without pity, to the malice of oppression, the caprices of chance, and the temptations of poverty; who rejoices to see him overwhelmed with calamities; and, when his own industry, or the charity of others, has enabled him to rise for a short time above his miseries, plunges him again into his former distress?

The kindness of his friends not affording him any constant supply, and the prospect of improving his fortune by enlarging his acquaintance, necessarily leading him to places of expence, he found it necessary * to endeavour once more at dramatic poetry, for which he was now better qualified by a more extensive knowledge, and longer observation. But

* In 1724.

having

having been unsuccessful in comedy, though rather for want of opportunities than genius, he resolved now to try whether he should not be more fortunate in exhibiting a tragedy.

The story which he chose for the subject, was that of Sir Thomas Overbury, a story well adapted to the stage, though perhaps not far enough removed from the present age, to admit properly the fictions necessary to complete the plan: for the mind, which naturally loves truth, is always most offended with the violation of those truths of which we are most certain; and we of course conceive those facts most certain, which approach nearest to our own time.

Out of this story he formed a tragedy, which, if the circumstances in which he wrote it be considered, will afford at once an uncommon proof of strength of genius, and evenness of mind, of a serenity not to be ruffled, and an imagination not to be suppressed.

During a considerable part of the time, in which he was employed upon this performance, he was without lodging, and often without meat; nor had he any other conveniences for study than the fields or the street allowed him; there he used to walk and form

his speeches, and afterwards step into a shop, beg for a few moments the use of the pen and ink, and write down what he had composed upon paper, which he had picked up by accident.

If the performance of a writer thus distressed is not perfect, its faults ought surely to be imputed to a cause very different from want of genius, and must rather excite pity than provoke censure.

But when under these discouragements the tragedy was finished, there yet remained the labour of introducing it on the stage, an undertaking, which, to an ingenuous mind, was in a very high degree vexatious and disgusting; for, having little interest or reputation, he was obliged to submit himself wholly to the players, and admit, with whatever reluctance, the emendations of Mr. Cibber, which he always considered as the disgrace of his performance.

He had indeed in Mr. Hill another critic of a very different class, from whose friendship he received great assistance on many occasions, and whom he never mentioned but with the utmost tenderness and regard. He had been for some time distinguished by him with very particular kindness, and on this occasion it was
natural

natural to apply to him as an author of an established character. He therefore sent this tragedy to him, with a short copy of verses, * in which he desired his correction. Mr. Hill, whose humanity and politeness are generally known, readily complied with his request; but as he is remarkable for singularity of sentiment, and bold experiments in language, Mr. Savage did not think his play much improved by his innovation, and had even at that time the courage to reject several passages which he could not approve; and what is still more laudable, Mr. Hill had the generosity not to resent the neglect of his alterations, but wrote the † prologue and epilogue, in which he touches on the circumstances of the author with great tenderness.

After all these obstructions and compliances, he was only able to bring his play upon the stage in the summer, when the chief actors had retired, and the rest were in possession of the house for their own advantage. Among these, Mr. Savage was admitted to play the part of Sir Thomas Overbury, by which he gained no great reputation, the theatre being a province for which nature seemed not to have designed him: for neither his voice, look, nor

* Printed in the Collection.

† See Savage's Works, vol. I. p. 148. 186.

gesture,

gesture, were such as were expected on the stage; and he was so much ashamed of having been reduced to appear as a player, that he always blotted out his name from the list, when a copy of his tragedy was to be shown to his friends.

In the publication of his performance he was more successful, for the rays of genius that glimmered in it, that glimmered through all the mists which poverty and Cibber had been able to spread over it, procured him the notice and esteem of many persons eminent for their rank, their virtue, and their wit.

Of this play, acted, printed, and dedicated, the accumulated profits arose to an hundred pounds, which he thought at that time a very large sum, having been never master of so much before.

In the Dedication *, for which he received ten guineas, there is nothing remarkable. The Preface contains a very liberal encomium on the blooming excellencies of Mr. Theophilus Cibber, which Mr. Savage could not in the latter part of his life see his friends about to read without snatching the play out of their hands. The generosity of Mr. Hill did not

* To Herbert Tryft, Esq; of Herefordshire.

end on this occasion; for afterwards, when Mr. Savage's necessities returned, he encouraged a subscription to a Miscellany of Poems in a very extraordinary manner, by publishing his story in the *PLAIN DEALER* †, with some affecting lines, which he asserts to have been written by Mr. Savage upon the treatment received by him from his mother, but of which he was himself the author, as Mr. Savage afterwards declared. These lines, and the paper in which they were inserted, had a very powerful effect upon all but his mother, whom, by making her cruelty more public, they only hardened in her aversion.

Mr. Hill not only promoted the subscription to the Miscellany, but furnished likewise the greatest part of the Poems of which it is composed, and particularly *THE HAPPY MAN*, which he published as a specimen.

The subscriptions of those whom these papers should influence to patronize merit in distress, without any other sollicitation, were directed to be left at Button's coffee-house; and Mr. Savage going thither a few days after-

† The *PLAIN DEALER* was a periodical paper, written by Mr. Hill and Mr. Bond, whom Mr. Savage called the two contending powers of light and darkness. They wrote by turns each six Essays; and the character of the work was observed regularly to rise in Mr. Hill's weeks, and fall in Mr. Bond's.

wards,

wards, without expectation of any effect from his proposal, found to his surprize seventy guineas *, which had been sent him in consequence of the compassion excited by Mr. Hill's pathetic representation.

To this Miscellany he wrote a Preface, in which he gives an account of his mother's cruelty in a very uncommon strain of humour, and with a gaiety of imagination, which the success of his subscription probably produced.

The Dedication is addressed to the Lady Mary Wortley Montague, whom he flatters without reserve, and, to confess the truth, with very little † art. The same observation may

* The names of those who so generously contributed to his relief, having been mentioned in a former account, ought not to be omitted here. They were the Dutchess of Cleveland, Lady Cheyney, Lady Castlemain, Lady Gower, Lady Lechmere, the Dutchess Dowager and Dutchess of Rutland, Lady Strafford, the Countess Dowager of Warwick, Mrs. Mary Floyer, Mrs. Sofuel Noel, Duke of Rutland, Lord Gainsborough, Lord Milfington, Mr. John Savage.

† This the following extract from it will prove.

—“ Since our country has been honoured with the glory of your wit, as elevated and immortal as your soul, it no longer remains
 “ a doubt whether your sex have strength of mind in proportion to
 “ their sweetness. There is something in your verses as distinguished as your air.—They are as strong as truth, as deep as
 “ reason, as clear as innocence, and as smooth as beauty—They
 “ contain a nameless and peculiar mixture of force and grace,
 “ which is at once so movingly serene, and so majestically lovely,
 “ that

may be extended to all his Dedications: his compliments are constrained and violent, heaped together without the grace of order, or the decency of introduction: he seems to have written his Panegyrics for the perusal only of his patrons, and to have imagined that he had no other task than to pamper them with praises however gross, and that flattery would make its way to the heart, without the assistance of elegance or invention.

Soon afterwards, the death of the king furnished a general subject for a poetical contest, in which Mr. Savage engaged, and is allowed to have carried the prize of honour from his competitors; but I know not whether he gained by his performance any other advantage than the increase of his reputation; though it must certainly have been with farther views that he prevailed upon himself to attempt a species of writing, of which all the topics had been long before exhausted, and which was made at once difficult by the multitudes that had failed in it, and those that had succeeded.

“ that it is too amiable to appear any where but in your eyes and in your writings.”

“ As fortune is not more my enemy than I am the enemy of flattery, I know not how I can forbear this application to your Ladyship, because there is scarce a possibility that I should say more than I believe, when I am speaking of your Excellence.”—

He

He was now advancing in reputation, and though frequently involved in very distressful perplexities, appeared however to be gaining upon mankind, when both his fame and his life were endangered by an event, of which it is not yet determined, whether it ought to be mentioned as a crime or a calamity.

On the 20th of November 1727, Mr. Savage came from Richmond, where he then lodged, that he might pursue his studies with less interruption, with an intent to discharge another lodging which he had in Westminster; and accidentally meeting two gentlemen his acquaintances, whose names were Merchant and Gregory, he went in with them to a neighbouring coffee-house, and sat drinking till it was late, it being in no time of Mr. Savage's life any part of his character to be the first of the company that desired to separate. He would willingly have gone to bed in the same house, but there was not room for the whole company, and therefore they agreed to ramble about the streets, and divert themselves with such amusements as should offer themselves till morning.

In their walk they happened unluckily to discover a light in Robinson's coffee-house, near Charing-cross, and therefore went in. Merchant, with some rudeness, demanded a
room,

room, and was told that there was a good fire in the next parlour, which the company were about to leave, being then paying their reckoning. Merchant, not satisfied with this answer, rushed into the room, and was followed by his companions. He then petulantly placed himself between the company and the fire, and soon after kicked down the table. This produced a quarrel, swords were drawn on both sides, and one Mr. James Sinclair was killed. Savage, having wounded likewise a maid that held him, forced his way with Merchant out of the house; but being intimidated and confused, without resolution either to fly or stay, they were taken in a back-court by one of the company and some foldiers, whom he had called to his assistance.

Being secured and guarded that night, they were in the morning carried before three justices, who committed them to the Gatehouse, from whence, upon the death of Mr. Sinclair, which happened the same day, they were removed in the night to Newgate, where they were however treated with some distinction, exempted from the ignominy of chains, and confined, not among the common criminals, but in the Press-yard.

When the day of trial came, the court was crowded in a very unusual manner, and the public

public appeared to interest itself as in a cause of general concern. The witnesses against Mr. Savage and his friends were, the woman who kept the house, which was a house of ill fame, and her maid, the men who were in the room with Mr. Sinclair, and a woman of the town, who had been drinking with them, and with whom one of them had been seen in bed. They swore in general, that Merchant gave the provocation, which Savage and Gregory drew their swords to justify; that Savage drew first, and that he stabbed Sinclair when he was not in a posture of defence, or while Gregory commanded his sword; that after he had given the thrust he turned pale, and would have retired, but that the maid clung round him, and one of the company endeavoured to detain him, from whom he broke, by cutting the maid on the head, but was afterwards taken in a court.

There was some difference in their depositions; one did not see Savage give the wound, another saw it given when Sinclair held his point towards the ground; and the woman of the town asserted, that she did not see Sinclair's sword at all: this difference however was very far from amounting to inconsistency; but it was sufficient to shew, that the hurry of the dispute was such, that it was not easy to discover the truth with relation to particular circum-

circumstances, and that therefore some deductions were to be made from the credibility of the testimonies.

Sinclair had declared several times before his death, that he received his wound from Savage, nor did Savage at his trial deny the fact, but endeavoured partly to extenuate it, by urging the suddenness of the whole action, and the impossibility of any ill design, or premeditated malice, and partly to justify it by the necessity of self-defence, and the hazard of his own life, if he had lost that opportunity of giving the thrust: he observed, that neither reason nor law obliged a man to wait for the blow which was threatened, and which, if he should suffer it, he might never be able to return; that it was always allowable to prevent an assault, and to preserve life by taking away that of the adversary, by whom it was endangered.

With regard to the violence with which he endeavoured to escape, he declared, that it was not his design to fly from justice, or decline a trial, but to avoid the expences and severities of a prison; and that he intended to have appeared at the bar without compulsion.

This defence, which took up more than an hour, was heard by the multitude that thronged

thronged the court with the most attentive and respectful silence: those who thought he ought not to be acquitted, owned that applause could not be refused him; and those who before pitied his misfortunes, now revered his abilities.

The witnesses which appeared against him were proved to be persons of characters which did not entitle them to much credit; a common strumpet, a woman by whom strumpets were entertained, and a man by whom they were supported; and the character of Savage was by several persons of distinction asserted to be that of a modest inoffensive man, not inclined to broils, or to insolence, and who had, to that time, been only known for his misfortunes and his wit.

Had his audience been his judges, he had undoubtedly been acquitted; but Mr. Page, who was then upon the bench, treated him with his usual insolence and severity, and when he had summed up the evidence, endeavoured to exasperate the jury, as Mr. Savage used to relate it, with this eloquent harangue:

‘Gentlemen of the jury, you are to consider
 ‘that Mr. Savage is a very great man, a much
 ‘greater man than you or I, gentlemen of
 ‘the jury; that he wears very fine clothes,
 ‘much

‘ much finer clothes than you or I, gentlemen of the jury; that he has abundance of money in his pocket, much more money than you or I, gentlemen of the jury; but, gentlemen of the jury, is it not a very hard case, gentlemen of the jury, that Mr. Savage should therefore kill you or me, gentlemen of the jury?’

Mr. Savage hearing his defence thus misrepresented, and the men who were to decide his fate incited against him by invidious comparisons, resolutely asserted, that his cause was not candidly explained, and began to recapitulate what he had before said with regard to his condition, and the necessity of endeavouring to escape the expences of imprisonment; but the judge having ordered him to be silent, and repeated his orders without effect, commanded that he should be taken from the bar by force.

The jury then heard the opinion of the judge, that good characters were of no weight against positive evidence, though they might turn the scale where it was doubtful; and that though, when two men attack each other, the death of either is only manslaughter; but where one is the aggressor, as in the case before them, and, in pursuance of his first attack, kills the other, the law supposes the action, however sudden, to be

be malicious. They then deliberated upon their verdict, and determined that Mr. Savage and Mr. Gregory were guilty of murder, and Mr. Merchant, who had no sword, only of manslaughter.

Thus ended this memorable trial, which lasted eight hours. Mr. Savage and Mr. Gregory were conducted back to prison, where they were more closely confined, and loaded with irons of fifty pounds weight: four days afterwards they were sent back to the court to receive sentence; on which occasion Mr. Savage made, as far as it could be retained in memory, the following speech.

“ It is now, my Lord, too late to offer any
“ thing by way of defence or vindication; nor
“ can we expect from your Lordships, in this,
“ court, but the sentence which the law re-
“ quires you, as judges, to pronounce against
“ men of our calamitous condition.—But we
“ are also persuaded, that as mere men, and
“ out of this seat of rigorous justice, you are
“ susceptible of the tender passions, and too
“ humane, not to commiserate the unhappy
“ situation of those, whom the law sometimes
“ perhaps—exact—from you to pronounce
“ upon. No doubt you distinguish between
“ offences, which arise out of premeditation,
“ and a disposition habituated to vice or im-
“ morality,

“ morality, and transgressions, which are the
“ unhappy and unforeseen effects of casual ab-
“ sence of reason, and sudden impulse of pas-
“ sion: we therefore hope you will contribute
“ all you can to an extension of that mercy,
“ which the gentlemen of the jury have been
“ pleased to shew Mr. Merchant, who (allow-
“ ing facts as sworn against us by the evidence)
“ has led us into this our calamity. I hope
“ this will not be construed, as if we meant to
“ reflect upon that gentleman, or remove any
“ thing from us upon him, or that we repine
“ the more at our fate, because he has no parti-
“ cipation of it: No, my Lord! For my part, I
“ declare nothing could more soften my grief,
“ than to be without any companion in so great
“ a misfortune *.”

Mr. Savage had now no hopes of life, but from the mercy of the crown, which was very earnestly solicited by his friends, and which, with whatever difficulty the story may obtain belief, was obstructed only by his mother.

To prejudice the Queen against him, she made use of an incident, which was omitted in the order of time, that it might be mentioned together with the purpose which it was made to serve. Mr. Savage, when he had discovered his birth, had an incessant desire to speak to his mother, who always avoided him

* Mr. Savage's Life.

in public, and refused him admission into her house. One evening walking, as it was his custom, in the street that she inhabited, he saw the door of her house by accident open; he entered it, and, finding no person in the passage to hinder him, went up stairs to salute her. She discovered him before he could enter her chamber, alarmed the family with the most distressful outcries, and when she had by her screams gathered them about her, ordered them to drive out of the house that villain, who had forced himself in upon her, and endeavoured to murder her. Savage, who had attempted with the most submissive tenderness to soften her rage, hearing her utter so detestable an accusation, thought it prudent to retire; and, I believe, never attempted afterwards to speak to her.

But, shocked as he was with her falsehood and her cruelty, he imagined that she intended no other use of her lye, than to set herself free from his embraces and solicitations, and was very far from suspecting that she would treasure it in her memory, as an instrument of future wickedness, or that she would endeavour for this fictitious assault to deprive him of his life.

But when the Queen was solicited for his pardon, and informed of the severe treatment which

which he had suffered from his judge, she answered, that, however unjustifiable might be the manner of his trial, or whatever extenuation the action for which he was condemned might admit, she could not think that man a proper object of the King's mercy, who had been capable of entering his mother's house in the night, with an intent to murder her.

By whom this atrocious calumny had been transmitted to the Queen; whether she that invented had the front to relate it; whether she found any one weak enough to credit it, or corrupt enough to concur with her in her hateful design, I know not: but methods had been taken to persuade the Queen so strongly of the truth of it, that she for a long time refused to hear any of those who petitioned for his life.

Thus had Savage perished by the evidence of a bawd, a strumpet, and his mother, had not justice and compassion procured him an advocate of rank too great to be rejected unheard, and of virtue too eminent to be heard without being believed. His merit and his calamities happened to reach the ear of the Countess of Hertford, who engaged in his support with all the tenderness that is excited by pity, and all the zeal which is kindled by generosity, and, demanding an audience of the Queen, laid before her the whole series of his mother's cruelty,

ty, exposed the improbability of an accusation by which he was charged with an intent to commit a murder that could produce no advantage, and soon convinced her how little his former conduct could deserve to be mentioned as a reason for extraordinary severity.

The interposition of this Lady was so successful, that he was soon after admitted to bail, and, on the 9th of March 1728, pleaded the King's pardon.

It is natural to enquire upon what motives his mother could persecute him in a manner so outrageous and implacable; for what reason she could employ all the arts of malice, and all the snares of calumny, to take away the life of her own son, of a son who never injured her, who was never supported by her expence, nor obstructed any prospect of pleasure or advantage; why she should endeavour to destroy him by a lye—a lye which could not gain credit, but must vanish of itself at the first moment of examination, and of which only this can be said to make it probable, that it may be observed from her conduct, that the most execrable crimes are sometimes committed without apparent temptation.

This mother is still alive, and may perhaps even yet, though her malice was so often defeated,

feated, enjoy the pleasure of reflecting, that the life, which she often endeavoured to destroy, was at least shortened by her maternal offices; that though she could not transport her son to the plantations, bury him in the shop of a mechanic, or hasten the hand of the public executioner, she has yet had the satisfaction of imbittering all his hours, and forcing him into exigencies that hurried on his death.

It is by no means necessary to aggravate the enormity of this woman's conduct, by placing it in opposition to that of the Countess of Hertford; no one can fail to observe how much more amiable it is to relieve, than to oppress, and to rescue innocence from destruction, than to destroy without an injury.

Mr. Savage, during his imprisonment, his trial, and the time in which he lay under sentence of death, behaved with great firmness and equality of mind, and confirmed by his fortitude the esteem of those who before admired him for his abilities. The peculiar circumstances of his life were made more generally known by a short account *, which was then published, and of which several thousands were in a few weeks dispersed over the nation; and

* Written by Mr. Beckingham and another gentleman.

the compassion of mankind operated so powerfully in his favour, that he was enabled, by frequent presents, not only to support himself, but to assist Mr. Gregory in prison; and, when he was pardoned and released, he found the number of his friends not lessened.

The nature of the act for which he had been tried was in itself doubtful; of the evidences which appeared against him, the character of the man was not unexceptionable, that of the women notoriously infamous: she, whose testimony chiefly influenced the jury to condemn him, afterwards retracted her assertions. He always himself denied that he was drunk, as had been generally reported. Mr. Gregory, who is now Collector of Antigua, is said to declare him far less criminal than he was imagined, even by some who favoured him: and Page himself afterwards confessed, that he had treated him with uncommon rigour. When all these particulars are rated together, perhaps the memory of Savage may not be much sullied by his trial.

Some time after he had obtained his liberty, he met in the street the woman that had sworn with so much malignity against him. She informed him, that she was in distress, and, with a degree of confidence not easily attainable, desired him to relieve her. He, instead of insulting

ing

ing her misery, and taking pleasure in the calamities of one who had brought his life into danger, reproved her gently for her perjury; and, changing the only guinea that he had, divided it equally between her and himself.

This is an action which in some ages would have made a saint, and perhaps in others a hero, and which, without any hyperbolical encomiums, must be allowed to be an instance of uncommon generosity, an act of complicated virtue; by which he at once relieved the poor, corrected the vicious, and forgave an enemy; by which he at once remitted the strongest provocations, and exercised the most ardent charity.

Compassion was indeed the distinguishing quality of Savage; he never appeared inclined to take advantage of weakness, to attack the defenceless, or to press upon the falling: whoever was distressed was certain at least of his good wishes; and when he could give no assistance to extricate them from misfortunes, he endeavoured to sooth them by sympathy and tenderness.

But when his heart was not softened by the sight of misery, he was sometimes obstinate in his resentment, and did not quickly lose the remembrance of an injury. He always continued

ed to speak with anger of the insolence and partiality of Page, and a short time before his death revenged it by a satire *.

Murderer

It is natural to enquire in what terms Mr. Savage spoke of this fatal action, when the danger was over, and he was under no necessity of using any art to set his conduct in the fairest light. He was not willing to dwell upon it; and if he transiently mentioned it, appeared neither to consider himself as a muderer, nor as a man wholly free from the guilt of blood †. How much and how long he regretted it, appeared in a poem which he published many years afterwards. On occasion of a copy of verses, in which the failings of good men were recounted, and in which the author had endeavoured to illustrate his position, that "the best may sometimes deviate from virtue," by an instance of murder committed by Savage in the heat of wine, Savage remarked, that it was no very just representation of a good man, to suppose him liable to drunkenness, and disposed in his riots to cut throats.

* Printed in his Works.

† In one of his letters he files it "a fatal quarrel, but too well known."

He

He was now indeed at liberty, but was, as before, without any other support than accidental favours and uncertain patronage afforded him; sources by which he was sometimes very liberally supplied, and which at other times were suddenly stopped; so that he spent his life between want and plenty; or, what was yet worse, between beggary and extravagance; for as whatever he received was the gift of chance, which might as well favour him at one time as another, he was tempted to squander what he had, because he always hoped to be immediately supplied.

Another cause of his profusion was the absurd kindness of his friends, who at once rewarded and enjoyed his abilities, by treating him at taverns, and habituated him to pleasures which he could not afford to enjoy, and which he was not able to deny himself, though he purchased the luxury of a single night by the anguish of cold and hunger for a week.

The experience of these inconveniences determined him to endeavour after some settled income, which, having long found submission and intreaties fruitless, he attempted to extort from his mother by rougher methods. He had now, as he acknowledged, lost that tenderness for her, which the whole series of her cruelty had not been able wholly to repress, till he found,

found, by the efforts which she made for his destruction, that she was not content with refusing to assist him, and being neutral in his struggles with poverty, but was as ready to snatch every opportunity of adding to his misfortunes, and that she was to be considered as an enemy implacably malicious, whom nothing but his blood could satisfy. He therefore threatened to harass her with lampoons, and to publish a copious narrative of her conduct, unless she consented to purchase an exemption from infamy, by allowing him a pension.

This expedient proved successful. Whether shame still survived, though virtue was extinct, or whether her relations had more delicacy than herself, and imagined that some of the darts which satire might point at her would glance upon them; Lord Tyreconnel, whatever were his motives, upon his promise to lay aside his design of exposing the cruelty of his mother, received him into his family, treated him as his equal, and engaged to allow him a pension of two hundred pounds a year.

This was the golden part of Mr. Savage's life; and for some time he had no reason to complain of fortune; his appearance was splendid, his expences large, and his acquaintance extensive. He was courted by all who endeavoured

voured to be thought men of genius, and caressed by all who valued themselves upon a refined taste. To admire Mr. Savage, was a proof of discernment, and to be acquainted with him, was a title to poetical reputation. His presence was sufficient to make any place of public entertainment popular; and his approbation and example constituted the fashion. So powerful is genius, when it is invested with the glitter of affluence! Men willingly pay to fortune that regard which they owe to merit, and are pleased when they have an opportunity at once of gratifying their vanity, and practising their duty.

This interval of prosperity furnished him with opportunities of enlarging his knowledge of human nature, by contemplating life from its highest gradations to its lowest; and, had he afterwards applied to dramatic poetry, he would perhaps not have had many superiors; for as he never suffered any scene to pass before his eyes without notice, he had treasured in his mind all the different combinations of passions, and the innumerable mixtures of vice and virtue, which distinguish one character from another; and, as his conception was strong, his expressions were clear, he easily received impressions from objects, and very forcibly transmitted them to others.

Of

Of his exact observations on human life he has left a proof, which would do honour to the greatest names, in a small pamphlet, called, *THE AUTHOR TO BE LET* *, where he introduces Iscariot Hackney, a prostitute scribbler, giving an account of his birth, his education, his disposition and morals, habits of life, and maxims of conduct. In the introduction are related many secret histories of the petty writers of that time, but sometimes mixed with ungenerous reflections on their birth, their circumstances, or those of their relations; nor can it be denied, that some passages are such as Iscariot Hackney might himself have produced.

He was accused likewise of living in an appearance of friendship with some whom he satirised, and of making use of the confidence which he gained by a seeming kindness to discover failings and expose them: it must be confessed, that Mr. Savage's esteem was no very certain possession, and that he would lampoon at one time those whom he had praised at another.

It may be alleged, that the same man may change his principles, and that, he who was once deservedly commended, may be after-

* Printed in his Works, vol. II. p. 231.

wards satirised with equal justice, or that the poet was dazzled with the appearance of virtue, and found the man whom he had celebrated, when he had an opportunity of examining him more narrowly, unworthy of the panegyric which he had too hastily bestowed; and that as a false satire ought to be recanted, for the sake of him whose reputation may be injured, false praise ought likewise to be obviated, lest the distinction between vice and virtue should be lost, lest a bad man should be trusted upon the credit of his encomiast, or lest others should endeavour to obtain the like praises by the same means.

But though these excuses may be often plausible, and sometimes just, they are very seldom satisfactory to mankind; and the writer, who is not constant to his subject, quickly sinks into contempt, his satire loses its force, and his panegyric its value, and he is only considered at one time as a flatterer, and as a calumniator at another.

To avoid these imputations, it is only necessary to follow the rules of virtue, and to preserve an unvaried regard to truth. For though it is undoubtedly possible, that a man, however cautious, may be sometimes deceived by an artful appearance of virtue, or by false evidences of guilt, such errors will not be frequent;

quent; and it will be allowed, that the name of an author would never have been made contemptible, had no man ever said what he did not think, or misled others but when he was himself deceived.

If *THE AUTHOR TO BE LET* was first published in a single pamphlet, and afterwards inserted in a collection of pieces relating to the *Dunciad*, which were addressed by Mr. Savage to the Earl of Middlesex, in a * dedication which he was prevailed upon to sign, though he did not write it, and in which there are some positions, that the true author would perhaps not have published under his own name, and on which Mr. Savage afterwards reflected with no great satisfaction; the enumeration of the bad effects of the uncontrolled freedom of the press, and the assertion that the "liberties taken by the writers of Journals with their superiors were exorbitant and unjustifiable," very ill became men, who have themselves not always shewn the exactest regard to the laws of subordination in their writings, and who have often satisfied those that at least thought themselves their superiors, as they were eminent for their hereditary rank, and employed in the highest offices of the kingdom. But this is only an instance of that par-

* See his Works, vol. II. p. 233.

tiality which almost every man indulges with regard to himself; the liberty of the press is a blessing when we are inclined to write against others, and a calamity when we find ourselves overborne by the multitude of our assailants; as the power of the crown is always thought too great by those who suffer by its influence, and too little by those in whose favour it is exerted; and a standing army is generally accounted necessary by those who command, and dangerous and oppressive by those who support it.

Mr. Savage was likewise very far from believing, that the letters annexed to each species of bad poets in the Bathos, were, as he was directed to assert, "set down at random;" for when he was charged by one of his friends with putting his name to such an improbability, he had no other answer to make, than that "he did not think of it," and his friend had too much tenderness to reply, that next to the crime of writing contrary to what he thought, was that of writing without thinking.

After having remarked what is false in this dedication, it is proper that I observe the impartiality which I recommend, by declaring what Savage asserted, that the account of the circumstances which attended the publication
of

of the Dunciad, however strange and improbable, was exactly true.

The publication of this piece at this time raised Mr. Savage a great number of enemies among those that were attacked by Mr. Pope, with whom he was considered as a kind of confederate, and whom he was suspected of supplying with private intelligence and secret incidents: so that the ignominy of an informer was added to the terror of a satirist.

That he was not altogether free from literary hypocrisy, and that he sometimes spoke one thing, and wrote another, cannot be denied; because he himself confessed, that, when he lived in great familiarity with Dennis, he wrote an epigram * against him.

Mr. Savage however set all the malice of all the pigmy writers at defiance, and thought the friendship of Mr. Pope cheaply purchased by being exposed to their censure and their

* This epigram was, I believe, never published.

Should Dennis publish you had stabb'd your brother,
Lampoon'd your monarch, or debauch'd your mother;
Say, what revenge on Dennis can be had,
Too dull for laughter, for reply too mad?
On one so poor you cannot take the law,
On one so old your sword you scorn to draw.
Uncag'd then, let the harmless monster rage,
Secure in dulness, madness, want, and age.

hatred;

hatred; nor had he any reason to repent of the preference, for he found Mr. Pope a steady and unalienable friend almost to the end of his life.

About this time, notwithstanding his avowed neutrality with regard to party, he published a panegyric on Sir Robert Walpole, for which he was rewarded by him with twenty guineas; a sum not very large, if either the excellence of the performance, or the affluence of the patron, be considered; but greater than he afterwards obtained from a person of yet higher rank, and more desirous in appearance of being distinguished as a patron of literature.

As he was very far from approving the conduct of Sir Robert Walpole, and in conversation mentioned him sometimes with acrimony, and generally with contempt; as he was one of those who were always zealous in their assertions of the justice of the late opposition, jealous of the rights of the people, and alarmed by the long-continued triumph of the court; it was natural to ask him what could induce him to employ his poetry in praise of that man who was, in his opinion, an enemy to liberty, and an oppressor of his country? He alledged, that he was then dependent upon the Lord Tyrconnel, who was an implicit fol-

lower of the ministry, and that being enjoined by him, not without menaces, to write in praise of his leader, he had not resolution sufficient to sacrifice the pleasure of affluence to that of integrity.

On this, and on many other occasions, he was ready to lament the misery of living at the tables of other men, which was his fate from the beginning to the end of his life: for I know not whether he ever had, for three months together, a settled habitation, in which he could claim a right of residence.

To this unhappy state it is just to impute much of the inconstancy of his conduct; for though a readiness to comply with the inclination of others was no part of his natural character, yet he was sometimes obliged to relax his obstinacy, and submit his own judgment, and even his virtue, to the government of those by whom he was supported: so that, if his miseries were sometimes the consequences of his faults, he ought not yet to be wholly excluded from compassion, because his faults were very often the effects of his misfortunes.

In this gay period * of his life, while he was surrounded by affluence and pleasure, he published

* 1729.

lished *THE WANDERER*, a moral Poem, of which the design is comprised in these lines:

I fly all public care, all venal strife,
To try the still, compar'd with active life:
To prove, by these the sons of men may owe
The fruits of bliss to bursting clouds of woe;
That ev'n calamity, by thought refin'd,
Inspirits and adorns the thinking mind.

And more distinctly in the following passage:

By woe, the soul to daring action swells;
By woe, in plaintless patience it excels;
From patience, prudent clear experience springs,
And traces knowledge, thro' the course of things!
Thence hope is form'd, thence fortitude, success,
Renown:—whate'er men covet and care.

This performance was always considered by himself as his master-piece; and Mr. Pope, when he asked his opinion of it, told him, that he read it once over, and was not displeased with it, that it gave him more pleasure at the second perusal, and delighted him still more at the third.

It has been generally objected to *THE WANDERER*, that the disposition of the parts is irregular; that the design is obscure, and the plan perplexed; that the images, however

beautiful, succeed each other without order; and that the whole performance is not so much a regular fabric, as a heap of shining materials thrown together by accident, which strikes rather with the solemn magnificence of a stupendous ruin, than the elegant grandeur of a finished pile.

This criticism is universal, and therefore it is reasonable to believe it at least in a great degree just; but Mr. Savage was always of a contrary opinion, and thought his drift could only be missed by negligence or stupidity, and that the whole plan was regular, and the parts distinct.

It was never denied to abound with strong representations of nature, and just observations upon life; and it may easily be observed, that most of his pictures have an evident tendency to illustrate his first great position, "that good is the consequence of evil." The sun that burns up the mountains, fructifies the vales; the deluge that rushes down the broken rocks with dreadful impetuosity, is separated into purling brooks; and the rage of the hurricane purifies the air.

Even in this poem he has not been able to forbear one touch upon the cruelty of his mother, which, though remarkably delicate and tender,

tender, is a proof how deep an impression it had upon his mind.

This must be at least acknowledged, which ought to be thought equivalent to many other excellencies, that this poem can promote no other purposes than those of virtue, and that it is written with a very strong sense of the efficacy of religion.

But my province is rather to give the history of Mr. Savage's performances, than to display their beauties, or to obviate the criticisms which they have occasioned; and therefore I shall not dwell upon the particular passages which deserve applause: I shall neither show the excellence of his descriptions, nor expatiate on the terrific portrait of suicide, nor point out the artful touches, by which he has distinguished the intellectual features of the rebels, who suffer death in his last canto. It is, however, proper to observe, that Mr. Savage always declared the characters wholly fictitious, and without the least allusion to any real persons or actions.

From a poem so diligently laboured, and so successfully finished, it might be reasonably expected that he should have gained considerable advantage; nor can it, without some degree of indignation and concern, be told, that he

he sold the copy for ten guineas, of which he afterwards returned two, that the two last sheets of the work might be reprinted, of which he had in his absence intrusted the correction to a friend, who was too indolent to perform it with accuracy.

A superstitious regard to the correction of his sheets was one of Mr. Savage's peculiarities: he often altered, revised, recurred to his first reading or punctuation, and again adopted the alteration: he was dubious and irresolute without end, as on a question of the last importance, and at last was seldom satisfied: the intrusion or omission of a comma was sufficient to discompose him, and he would lament an error of a single letter as a heavy calamity. In one of his letters relating to an impression of some verses, he remarks, that he had, with regard to the correction of the proof, "a spell upon him;" and indeed the anxiety, with which he dwelt upon the minutest and most trifling niceties, deserved no other name than that of fascination.

That he sold so valuable a performance for so small a price was not to be imputed either to necessity, by which the learned and ingenious are often obliged to submit to very hard conditions; or to avarice, by which the booksellers are frequently incited to oppress
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that genius by which they are supported; but to that intemperate desire of pleasure, and habitual slavery to his passions, which involved him in many perplexities; he happened at that time to be engaged in the pursuit of some trifling gratification, and, being without money for the present occasion, sold his poem to the first bidder, and perhaps for the first price that was proposed, and would probably have been content with less, if less had been offered him.

This poem was addressed to the Lord Tyrconnel, not only in the first lines, but in a formal dedication filled with the highest strains of panegyric, and the warmest professions of gratitude, but by no means remarkable for delicacy of connexion or elegance of style.

These praises in a short time he found himself inclined to retract, being discarded by the man on whom he had bestowed them, and whom he then immediately discovered not to have deserved them. Of this quarrel, which every day made more bitter, Lord Tyrconnel and Mr. Savage assigned very different reasons, which might perhaps all in reality concur, though they were not all convenient to be alledged by either party. Lord Tyrconnel affirmed, that it was the constant practice of Mr. Savage to enter a tavern with any company

pany that proposed it, drink the most expensive wines with great profusion, and when the reckoning was demanded, to be without money: If, as it often happened, his company were willing to defray his part, the affair ended, without any ill consequences; but, if they were refractory, and expected that the wine should be paid for by him that drank it, his method of composition was, to take them with him to his own apartment, assume the government of the house, and order the butler in an imperious manner to set the best wine in the cellar before his company, who often drank till they forgot the respect due to the house in which they were entertained, indulged themselves in the utmost extravagance of merriment, practised the most licentious frolicks, and committed all the outrages of drunkenness.

Nor was this the only charge which Lord Tyrconnel brought against him: Having given him a collection of valuable books, stamped with his own arms, he had the mortification to see them in a short time exposed to sale upon the stalls, it being usual with Mr. Savage, when he wanted a small sum, to take his books to the pawnbroker.

Whoever was acquainted with Mr. Savage easily credited both these accusations: for, having been obliged from his first entrance into the

the world to subsist upon expedients, affluence was not able to exalt him above them; and so much was he delighted with wine and conversation, and so long had he been accustomed to live by chance, that he would at any time go to the tavern without scruple, and trust for his reckoning to the liberality of his company, and frequently of company to whom he was very little known. This conduct indeed very seldom drew upon him those inconveniences that might be feared by any other person; for his conversation was so entertaining, and his address so pleasing, that few thought the pleasure which they received from him dearly purchased, by paying for his wine. It was his peculiar happiness, that he scarcely ever found a stranger, whom he did not leave a friend; but it must likewise be added, that he had not often a friend long, without obliging him to become a stranger.

Mr. Savage on the other hand, declared, that Lord Tyrconnel * quarrelled with him, because he would subtract from his own luxury and extravagance what he had promised to allow him, and that his resentment was only a plea for the violation of his promise: He asserted,

* His expression in one of his letters was, "that L. T—— had involved his estate, and therefore poorly sought an occasion to quarrel with him."

that

that he had done nothing that ought to exclude him from that subsistence which he thought not so much a favour, as a debt, since it was offered him upon conditions, which he had never broken; and that his only fault was, that he could not be supported with nothing.

He acknowledged, that Lord Tyrconnel often exhorted him to regulate his method of life, and not to spend all his nights in taverns; and that he appeared very desirous, that he would pass those hours with him, which he so freely bestowed upon others. This demand Mr. Savage considered as a censure of his conduct, which he could never patiently bear; and which, in the latter and cooler part of his life, was so offensive to him, that he declared it as his resolution, "to spurn that friend who should "presume to dictate to him;" and it is not likely, that in his earlier years he received admonitions with more calmness.

He was likewise inclined to resent such expectations, as tending to infringe his liberty, of which he was very jealous, when it was necessary to the gratification of his passions; and declared, that the request was still more unreasonable, as the company to which he was to have been confined was insupportably disagreeable. This assertion affords another instance of that
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inconsistency of his writings with his conversation, which was so often to be observed. He forgot how lavishly he had, in his Dedication to *THE WANDERER*, extolled the delicacy and penetration, the humanity and generosity, the candour and politeness, of the man, whom, when he no longer loved him, he declared to be a wretch without understanding, without good-nature, and without justice; of whose name he thought himself obliged to leave no trace in any future edition of his writings; and accordingly blotted it out of that copy of *THE WANDERER* which was in his hands.

During his continuance with the Lord Tyrconnel, he wrote *THE TRIUMPH OF HEALTH AND MIRTH*, on the recovery of Lady Tyrconnel from a languishing illness. This performance is remarkable, not only for the gaiety of the ideas, and the melody of the numbers, but for the agreeable fiction upon which it is formed. Mirth, overwhelmed with sorrow for the sickness of her favourite, takes a flight in quest of her sister Health, whom she finds reclined upon the brow of a lofty mountain, amidst the fragrance of perpetual spring, with the breezes of the morning sporting about her. Being solicited by her sister Mirth, she readily promises her assistance, flies away in a cloud, and impregnates the waters of Bath with new virtues,

virtues, by which the sickness of Belinda is relieved.

As the reputation of his abilities, the particular circumstances of his birth and life, the splendour of his appearance, and the distinction which was for some time paid him by Lord Tyrconnel, intitled him to familiarity with persons of higher rank, than those to whose conversation he had been before admitted, he did not fail to gratify that curiosity, which induced him to take a nearer view of those whom their birth, their employments, or their fortunes, necessarily place at a distance from the greatest part of mankind, and to examine whether their merit was magnified or diminished by the medium through which it was contemplated; whether the splendour with which they dazzled their admirers was inherent in themselves, or only reflected on them by the objects that surrounded them; and whether great men were selected for high stations, or high stations made great men.

For this purpose he took all opportunities of conversing familiarly with those who were most conspicuous at that time for their power or their influence; he watched their looser moments, and examined their domestic behaviour with that acuteness which nature had given him, and which the uncommon variety of
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of his life had contributed to increase, and that inquisitiveness which must always be produced in a vigorous mind, by an absolute freedom from all pressing or domestic engagements. His discernment was quick, and therefore he soon found in every person, and in every affair, something that deserved attention; he was supported by others, without any care for himself, and was therefore at leisure to pursue his observations.

More circumstances to constitute a critic on human life could not easily concur; nor indeed could any man, who assumed from accidental advantages more praise than he could justly claim from his real merit, admit an acquaintance more dangerous than that of Savage; of whom likewise it must be confessed, that abilities really exalted above the common level, or virtue resisted from passion, or proof against corruption, could not easily find an abler judge, or a warmer advocate.

What was the result of Mr. Savage's enquiry, though he was not much accustomed to conceal his discoveries, it may not be entirely safe to relate, because the persons whose characters he criticised are powerful; and power and resentment are seldom strangers; nor would it perhaps be wholly just, because what he asserted in conversation might, though true in general,

general, be heightened by some momentary ardour of imagination, and, as it can be delivered only from memory, may be imperfectly represented; so that the picture at first aggravated, and then unskilfully copied, may be justly suspected to retain no great resemblance of the original.

It may however be observed, that he did not appear to have formed very elevated ideas of those to whom the administration of affairs, or the conduct of parties, has been intrusted; who have been considered as the advocates of the crown, or the guardians of the people; and who have obtained the most implicit confidence, and the loudest applauses. Of one particular person, who has been at one time so popular as to be generally esteemed, and at another so formidable as to be universally detested, he observed, that his acquisitions had been small, or that his capacity was narrow, and that the whole range of his mind was from obscenity to politics, and from politics to obscenity.

But the opportunity of indulging his speculations on great characters was now at an end. He was banished from the table of Lord Tyrconnel, and turned again adrift upon the world, without prospect of finding quickly any other harbour. As prudence was not one
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of the virtues by which he was distinguished, he had made no provision against a misfortune like this. And though it is not to be imagined, but that the separation must for some time have been preceded by coldness, peevishness, or neglect, though it was undoubtedly the consequence of accumulated provocations on both sides; yet every one that knew Savage will readily believe, that to him it was sudden as a stroke of thunder; that, though he might have transiently suspected it, he had never suffered any thought so unpleasant to sink into his mind, but that he had driven it away by amusements, or dreams of future felicity and affluence, and had never taken any measures by which he might prevent a precipitation from plenty to indigence.

This quarrel and separation, and the difficulties to which Mr. Savage was exposed by them, were soon known both to his friends and enemies; nor was it long before he perceived, from the behaviour of both, how much is added to the lustre of genius by the ornaments of wealth.

His condition did not appear to excite much compassion; for he had not always been careful to use the advantages he enjoyed with that moderation which ought to have been with more than usual caution preserved by him,
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who knew, if he had reflected, that he was only a dependant on the bounty of another, whom he could expect to support him no longer than he endeavoured to preserve his favour by complying with his inclinations, and whom he nevertheless set at defiance, and was continually irritating by negligence or encroachments.

Examples need not be sought at any great distance to prove, that superiority of fortune has a natural tendency to kindle pride, and that pride seldom fails to exert itself in contempt and insult; and if this is often the effect of hereditary wealth, and of honours enjoyed only by the merit of others, it is some extenuation of any indecent triumphs to which this unhappy man may have been betrayed, that his prosperity was heightened by the force of novelty, and made more intoxicating by a sense of the misery in which he had so long languished, and perhaps of the insults which he had formerly borne, and which he might now think himself entitled to revenge. It is too common for those who have unjustly suffered pain, to inflict it likewise in their turn with the same injustice, and to imagine that they have a right to treat others as they have themselves been treated.

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That Mr. Savage was too much elevated by any good fortune, is generally known; and some passages of his Introduction to THE AUTHOR TO BE LET sufficiently shew, that he did not wholly refrain from such satire as he afterwards thought very unjust, when he was exposed to it himself; for, when he was afterwards ridiculed in the character of a distressed poet, he very easily discovered, that distress was not a proper subject for merriment, or topic of invective. He was then able to discern, that, if misery be the effect of virtue, it ought to be revered; if of ill-fortune, to be pitied; and if of vice, not to be insulted, because it is perhaps itself a punishment adequate to the crime by which it was produced. And the humanity of that man can deserve no panegyric, who is capable of reproaching a criminal in the hands of the executioner.

But these reflections, though they readily occurred to him in the first and last parts of his life, were, I am afraid, for a long time forgotten; at least they were, like many other maxims, treasured up in his mind, rather for shew than use, and operated very little upon his conduct, however elegantly he might sometimes explain, or however forcibly he might inculcate, them.

His degradation therefore from the condition which he had enjoyed with such wanton thoughtlessness, was considered by many as an occasion of triumph. Those who had before paid their court to him without success, soon returned the contempt which they had suffered; and they who had received favours from him, for of such favours as he could bestow he was very liberal, did not always remember them. So much more certain are the effects of resentment than of gratitude: it is not only to many more pleasing to recollect those faults which place others below them, than those virtues by which they are themselves comparatively depressed; but it is likewise more easy to neglect, than to recompense; and though there are few who will practise a laborious virtue, there will never be wanting multitudes that will indulge an easy vice.

Savage however was very little disturbed at the marks of contempt which his ill-fortune brought upon him, from those whom he never esteemed, and with whom he never considered himself as levelled by any calamities; and though it was not without some uneasiness that he saw some, whose friendship he valued, change their behaviour; he yet observed their coldness without much emotion, considered them as the slaves of fortune and the worship-

pers of prosperity, and was more inclined to despise them, than to lament himself.

It does not appear, that, after this return of his wants, he found mankind equally favourable to him, as at his first appearance in the world. His story, though in reality not less melancholy, was less affecting, because it was no longer new; it therefore procured him no new friends; and those that had formerly relieved him thought they might now consign him to others. He was now likewise considered by many rather as criminal, than as unhappy; for the friends of Lord Tyrconnel, and of his mother, were sufficiently industrious to publish his weaknesses, which were indeed very numerous; and nothing was forgotten, that might make him either hateful or ridiculous.

It cannot but be imagined, that such representations of his faults must make great numbers less sensible of his distress; many, who had only an opportunity to hear one part, made no scruple to propagate the account which they received; many assisted their circulation from malice or revenge; and perhaps many pretended to credit them, that they might with a better grace withdraw their regard, or withhold their assistance.

Savage however was not one of those, who suffered himself to be injured without resistance, nor was less diligent in exposing the faults of Lord Tyrconnel, over whom he obtained at least this advantage, that he drove him first to the practice of outrage and violence; for he was so much provoked by the wit and virulence of Savage, that he came with a number of attendants, that did no honour to his courage, to beat him at a coffee-house. But it happened that he had left the place a few minutes, and his lordship had, without danger, the pleasure of boasting how he would have treated him. Mr. Savage went next day to repay his visit at his own house; but was prevailed on, by his domestics, to retire without insisting upon seeing him.

Lord Tyrconnel was accused by Mr. Savage of some actions, which scarcely any provocations will be thought sufficient to justify; such as seizing what he had in his lodgings, and other instances of wanton cruelty, by which he increased the distress of Savage, without any advantage to himself.

These mutual accusations were retorted on both sides, for many years, with the utmost degree of virulence and rage; and time seemed rather to augment than diminish their resentment. That the anger of Mr. Savage should

should be kept alive is not strange, because he felt every day the consequences of the quarrel; but it might reasonably have been hoped, that Lord Tyrconnel might have relented, and at length have forgot those provocations, which, however they might have once inflamed him, had not in reality much hurt him.

The spirit of Mr. Savage indeed never suffered him to solicit a reconciliation; he returned reproach for reproach, and insult for insult; his superiority of wit supplied the disadvantages of his fortune, and enabled him to form a party, and prejudice great numbers in his favour.

But though this might be some gratification of his vanity, it afforded very little relief to his necessities; and he was very frequently reduced to uncommon hardships, of which, however, he never made any mean or importunate complaints, being formed rather to bear misery with fortitude, than enjoy prosperity with moderation.

He now thought himself again at liberty to expose the cruelty of his mother, and therefore, I believe, about this time, published *THE BASTARD*, a poem remarkable for the vivacious sallies of thought in the beginning *.

* Reprinted in his Works,

where he makes a pompous enumeration of the imaginary advantages of base birth; and the pathetic sentiments at the end, where he recounts the real calamities which he suffered by the crime of his parents.

The vigour and spirit of the verses, the peculiar circumstances of the author, the novelty of the subject, and the notoriety of the story to which the allusions are made, procured this performance a very favourable reception; great numbers were immediately dispersed, and editions were multiplied with unusual rapidity.

One circumstance attended the publication, which Savage used to relate with great satisfaction. His mother, to whom the poem was with "due reverence" inscribed, happened then to be at Bath, where she could not conveniently retire from censure, or conceal herself from observation; and no sooner did the reputation of the poem begin to spread, than she heard it repeated in all places of concourse, nor could she enter the assembly-rooms, or cross the walks, without being saluted with some lines from **THE BASTARD.**

This was perhaps the first time that ever she discovered a sense of shame, and on this occasion the power of wit was very conspicuous; the wretch who had, without scruple, proclaimed

claimed herself an adulteress, and who had first endeavoured to starve her son, then to transport him, and afterwards to hang him, was not able to bear the representation of her own conduct; but fled from reproach, though she felt no pain from guilt, and left Bath with the utmost haste, to shelter herself among the crowds of London.

Thus Savage had the satisfaction of finding, that, though he could not reform his mother, he could punish her, and that he did not always suffer alone.

The pleasure which he received from this increase of his poetical reputation, was sufficient for some time to overbalance the miseries of want, which this performance did not much alleviate; for it was sold for a very trivial sum to a bookseller, who, though the success was so uncommon that five impressions were sold, of which many were undoubtedly very numerous, had not generosity sufficient to admit the unhappy writer to any part of the profit.

The sale of this poem was always mentioned by Savage with the utmost elevation of heart, and referred to by him as an incontestable proof of a general acknowledgment of his abilities. It was indeed the only production
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of which he could justly boast a general reception.

But though he did not lose the opportunity which success gave him, of setting a high rate on his abilities, but paid due deference to the suffrages of mankind when they were given in his favour, he did not suffer his esteem of himself to depend upon others, nor found any thing sacred in the voice of the people when they were inclined to censure him; he then readily shewed the folly of expecting that the public should judge right, observed how slowly poetical merit had often forced its way into the world; he contented himself with the applause of men of judgement, and was somewhat disposed to exclude all those from the character of men of judgement who did not applaud him.

But he was at other times more favourable to mankind than to think them blind to the beauties of his works, and imputed the slowness of their sale to other causes; either they were published at a time when the town was empty, or when the attention of the public was engrossed by some struggle in the parliament, or some other object of general concern; or they were by the neglect of the publisher not diligently dispersed, or by his avarice not advertised with sufficient frequency. Address,

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or industry, or liberality, was always wanting; and the blame was laid rather on any person than the author.

By arts like these, arts which every man practises in some degree, and to which too much of the little tranquillity of life is to be ascribed, Savage was always able to live at peace with himself. Had he indeed only made use of these expedients to alleviate the loss or want of fortune or reputation, or any other advantages, which it is not in man's power to bestow upon himself, they might have been justly mentioned as instances of a philosophical mind, and very properly proposed to the imitation of multitudes, who, for want of diverting their imaginations with the same dexterity, languish under afflictions which might be easily removed.

It were doubtless to be wished, that truth and reason were universally prevalent; that every thing were esteemed according to its real value; and that men would secure themselves from being disappointed in their endeavours after happiness, by placing it only in virtue, which is always to be obtained; but if adventitious and foreign pleasures must be pursued, it would be perhaps of some benefit, since that pursuit must frequently be fruitless, if the practice of Savage could be taught, that folly might
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be an antidote to folly, and one fallacy be obviated by another.

But the danger of this pleasing intoxication must not be concealed; nor indeed can any one, after having observed the life of Savage, need to be cautioned against it. By imputing none of his miseries to himself, he continued to act upon the same principles, and to follow the same path; was never made wiser by his sufferings, nor preserved by one misfortune from falling into another. He proceeded throughout his life to tread the same steps on the same circle; always applauding his past conduct, or at least forgetting it, to amuse himself with phantoms of happiness, which were dancing before him; and willingly turned his eyes from the light of reason, when it would have discovered the illusion, and shewn him, what he never wished to see, his real state.

He is even accused, after having lulled his imagination with those ideal opiates, of having tried the same experiment upon his conscience; and, having accustomed himself to impute all deviations from the right to foreign causes, it is certain that he was upon every occasion too easily reconciled to himself, and that he appeared very little to regret those practices which had impaired his reputation. The reigning error of his life was, that he mistook the
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love for the practice of virtue, and was indeed not so much a good man, as the friend of goodness.

This at least must be allowed him, that he always preserved a strong sense of the dignity, the beauty, and the necessity, of virtue, and that he never contributed deliberately to spread corruption amongst mankind; his actions, which were generally precipitate, were often blameable; but his writings, being the productions of study, uniformly tended to the exaltation of the mind, and the propagation of morality and piety.

These writings may improve mankind, when his failings shall be forgotten; and therefore he must be considered, upon the whole, as a benefactor to the world; nor can his personal example do any hurt, since, whoever hears of his faults, will hear of the miseries which they brought upon him, and which would deserve less pity, had not his condition been such as made his faults pardonable. He may be considered as a child exposed to all the temptations of indigence, at an age when resolution was not yet strengthened by conviction, nor virtue confirmed by habit; a circumstance which in his **BASTARD** he laments in a very affecting manner:

No

— No Mother's care
 Shielded my infant innocence with prayer:
 No Father's guardian-hand my youth maintain'd,
 Call'd forth my virtues, or from vice restrain'd.

THE BASTARD, however it might provoke or mortify his mother, could not be expected to melt her to compassion, so that he was still under the same want of the necessities of life; and he therefore exerted all the interest which his wit, or his birth, or his misfortunes, could procure, to obtain, upon the death of Eusden, the place of Poet Laureat, and prosecuted his application with so much diligence, that the King publickly declared it his intention to bestow it upon him; but such was the fate of Savage, that even the King, when he intended his advantage, was disappointed in his schemes; for the Lord Chamberlain, who has the disposal of the laurel, as one of the appendages of his office, either did not know the King's design, or did not approve it, or thought the nomination of the Laureat an encroachment upon his rights, and therefore bestowed the laurel upon Colly Cibber.

Mr. Savage, thus disappointed, took a resolution of applying to the Queen, that, having once given him life, she would enable him to support it, and therefore published a short
 poem

poem on her birth-day, to which he gave the odd title of VOLUNTEER LAUREAT. The event of this essay he has himself related in the following letter, which he prefixed to the poem, when he afterwards reprinted it in THE GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE, from whence I have copied it entire, as this was one of the few attempts in which Mr. Savage succeeded.

" Mr. URBAN,

" In your Magazine for February you published the last VOLUNTEER LAUREAT, written on a very melancholy occasion, the death of the royal patroness of arts and literature in general, and of the author of that poem in particular: I now send you the first that Mr. Savage wrote under that title.—This gentleman, notwithstanding a very considerable interest, being, on the death of Mr. Eusden, disappointed of the Laureat's place, wrote the before-mentioned poem; which was no sooner published, but the late Queen sent to a bookseller for it: the author had not at that time a friend either to get him introduced, or his poem presented at court; yet such was the unspeakable goodness of that Princess, that, notwithstanding this act of ceremony was wanting, in a few days after publication, Mr. Savage

" received

"received a Bank-bill of fifty pounds, and a
 "gracious message from her Majesty, by the
 "Lord North and Guilford, to this effect;
 "That her Majesty was highly pleased with
 "the verses; that she took particularly kind
 "his lines there relating to the King; that
 "he had permission to write annually on the
 "same subject; and that he should yearly
 "receive the like present, till something bet-
 "ter (which was her Majesty's intention)
 "could be done for him." After this, he
 "was permitted to present one of his annual
 "poems to her Majesty, had the honour of
 "kissing her hand, and met with the most
 "gracious reception.

"Your's, &c."

Such was the performance, and such its re-
 ception; a reception which, though by no
 means unkind, was yet not in the highest de-
 gree generous; to chain down the genius of a
 writer to an annual panegyric, shewed in the
 Queen too much desire of hearing her own
 praises, and a greater regard to herself than to
 him on whom her bounty was conferred. It
 was a kind of avaricious generosity, by which
 flattery was rather purchased than genius re-
 warded.

Mrs. Oldfield had formerly given him the
 same allowance with much more heroic inten-
 tion;

tion; she had no other view than to enable him to prosecute his studies, and to set himself above the want of assistance, and was contented with doing good without stipulating for encomiums.

Mr. Savage however was not at liberty to make exceptions, but was ravished with the favours which he had received, and probably yet more with those which he was promised; he considered himself now as a favourite of the Queen, and did not doubt but a few annual poems would establish him in some profitable employment.

He therefore assumed the title of VOLUNTEER LAUREAT, not without some reprehensions from Cibber, who informed him, that the title of LAUREAT was a mark of honour conferred by the King, from whom all honour is derived, and which therefore no man has a right to bestow upon himself; and added, that he might, with equal propriety, stile himself a Volunteer Lord, or Volunteer Baronet. It cannot be denied that the remark was just; but Savage did not think any title, which was conferred upon Mr. Cibber, so honourable as that the usurpation of it could be imputed to him as an instance of very exorbitant vanity, and therefore continued to write under the same

same title, and received every year the same reward.

He did not appear to consider these encomiums as tests of his abilities, or as any thing more than annual hints to the Queen of her promise, or acts of ceremony, by the performance of which he was intitled to his pension, and therefore did not labour them with great diligence, or print more than fifty each year, except that for some of the last years he regularly inserted them in *THE GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE*, by which they were dispersed over the kingdom.

Of some of them he had himself so low an opinion, that he intended to omit them in the collection of poems, for which he printed proposals, and solicited subscriptions; nor can it seem strange, that, being confined to the same subject, he should be at some times indolent, and at others unsuccessful; that he should sometimes delay a disagreeable task, till it was too late to perform it well; or that he should sometimes repeat the same sentiment on the same occasion, or at others be misled by an attempt after novelty to forced conceptions and far-fetched images.

He wrote indeed with a double intention, which supplied him with some variety; for his busi-

business was to praise the Queen for the favours which he had received, and to complain to her of the delay of those which she had promised: in some of his pieces, therefore, gratitude is predominant, and in some discontent; in some he represents himself as happy in her patronage, and in others as disconsolate to find himself neglected.

Her promise, like other promises made to this unfortunate man, was never performed, though he took sufficient care that it should not be forgotten. The publication of his VOLUNTEER LAUREAT procured him no other reward than a regular remittance of fifty pounds.

He was not so depressed by his disappointments as to neglect any opportunity that was offered of advancing his interest. When the Princess Anne was married, he wrote a poem * upon her departure, only, as he declared, "because it was expected from him," and he was not willing to bar his own prospects by any appearance of neglect.

He never mentioned any advantage gained by this poem, or any regard that was paid to it; and therefore it is likely that it was consider-

* Printed in his Works.

ed at court as an act of duty to which he was obliged by his dependence, and which it was therefore not necessary to reward by any new favour: or perhaps the Queen really intended his advancement, and therefore thought it superfluous to lavish presents upon a man whom she intended to establish for life.

About this time not only his hopes were in danger of being frustrated, but his pension likewise of being obstructed, by an accidental calumny. The writer of *THE DAILY COURANT*, a paper then published under the direction of the ministry, charged him with a crime, which, though not very great in itself, would have been remarkably invidious in him, and might very justly have incensed the Queen against him. He was accused by name of influencing elections against the court, by appearing at the head of a tory mob; nor did the accuser fail to aggravate his crime, by representing it as the effect of the most atrocious ingratitude, and a kind of rebellion against the Queen, who had first preserved him from an infamous death, and afterwards distinguished him by her favour, and supported him by her charity. The charge, as it was open and confident, was likewise by good fortune very particular. The place of the transaction was mentioned, and the whole series of the rioter's conduct related. This exactness made Mr. Savage's

Savage's vindication easy; for he never had in his life seen the place which was declared to be the scene of his wickedness, nor ever had been present in any town when its representatives were chosen. This answer he therefore made haste to publish, with all the circumstances necessary to make it credible; and very reasonably demanded, that the accusation should be retracted in the same paper, that he might no longer suffer the imputation of sedition and ingratitude. This demand was likewise pressed by him in a private letter to the author of the paper, who either trusting to the protection of those whose defence he had undertaken, or having entertained some personal malice against Mr. Savage, or fearing, lest, by retracting so confident an assertion, he should impair the credit of his paper, refused to give him that satisfaction.

Mr. Savage therefore thought it necessary, to his own vindication, to prosecute him in the King's Bench; but as he did not find any ill effects from the accusation, having sufficiently cleared his innocence, he thought any farther procedure would have the appearance of revenge, and therefore willingly dropped it.

He saw soon afterwards a process commenced in the same court against himself, on an in-

formation in which he was accused of writing and publishing an obscene pamphlet.

It was always Mr. Savage's desire to be distinguished; and, when any controversy became popular, he never wanted some reason for engaging in it with great ardour, and appearing at the head of the party which he had chosen. As he was never celebrated for his prudence, he had no sooner taken his side, and informed himself of the chief topicks of the dispute, than he took all opportunities of asserting and propagating his principles, without much regard to his own interest, or any other visible design than that of drawing upon himself the attention of mankind.

The dispute between the Bishop of London and the Chancellor is well known to have been for some time the chief topick of political conversation; and therefore Mr. Savage, in pursuance of his character, endeavoured to become conspicuous among the controvertists with which every coffee-house was filled on that occasion. He was an indefatigable opposer of all the claims of ecclesiastical power, though he did not know on what they were founded; and was therefore no friend to the Bishop of London. But he had another reason for appearing as a warm advocate for Dr. Rundle; for he was the friend of Mr. Foster and
Mr.

Mr. Thomson, who were the friends of Mr. Savage.

Thus remote was his interest in the question, which however, as he imagined, concerned him so nearly, that it was not sufficient to harangue and dispute, but necessary likewise to write upon it.

He therefore engaged with great ardour in a new Poem, called by him, *THE PROGRESS OF A DIVINE*; in which he conducts a profligate priest by all the gradations of wickedness from a poor curacy in the country, to the highest preferments in the church, and describes with that humour which was natural to him, and that knowledge which was extended to all the diversities of human life, his behaviour in every station; and insinuates, that this priest, thus accomplished, found at last a patron in the Bishop of London.

When he was asked by one of his friends, on what pretence he could charge the Bishop with such an action, he had no more to say, than that he had only inverted the accusation, and that he thought it reasonable to believe, that he, who obstructed the rise of a good man without reason, would for bad reasons promote the exaltation of a villain.

The

The clergy were universally provoked by this satire; and Savage, who, as was his constant practice, had set his name to his performance, was censured in *THE WEEKLY MISCELLANY* * with severity, which he did not seem inclined to forget.

But

* A short satire was likewise published in the same paper, in which were the following lines:

For cruel murder doom'd to hempen death,
Savage, by royal grace, prolong'd his breath.
Well might you think he spent his future years
In prayer, and fasting, and repentant tears.
—But, O vain hope!—the truly Savage cries,
“ Priests, and their slavish doctrines, I despise.
“ Shall I ——
“ Who, by free-thinking to free action fir'd,
“ In midnight brawls a deathless name acquir'd,
“ Now stoop to learn of ecclesiastic men?—
“ —No, arm'd with rhyme, at priests I'll take my aim,
“ Though prudence bids me murder but their fame.”

WEEKLY MISCELLANY.

An answer was published in *THE GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE*, written by an unknown hand, from which the following lines are selected:

Transform'd by thoughtless rage, and midnight wine,
From malice free, and push'd without design;
In equal brawl if Savage lung'd a thrust,
And brought the youth a victim to the dust;
So strong the hand of accident appears,
The royal hand from guilt and vengeance clears.

Instead

But a return of invective was not thought a sufficient punishment. The Court of King's Bench was therefore moved against him, and he was obliged to return an answer to a charge of obscenity. It was urged, in his defence, that obscenity was criminal when it was intended to promote the practice of vice; but that Mr. Savage had only introduced obscene ideas, with the view of exposing them to detestation, and of amending the age, by shewing the deformity of wickedness. This plea was admitted; and Sir Philip Yorke, who then presided in that court, dismissed the information with enco-

Instead of wasting "all thy future years,
 "Savage, in prayer and vain repentant tears;"
 Exert thy pen to mend a vicious age,
 To curb the priest, and sink his high-church rage;
 To shew what frauds the holy vestments hide,
 The nests of av'rice, lust, and pedant pride;
 Then change the scene, let merit brightly shine,
 And round the patriot twist the wreath divine;
 The heavenly guide deliver down to fame;
 In well-tun'd lays transmit a Foster's name;
 Touch every passion with harmonious art,
 Exalt the genius, and correct the heart.
 Thus future times shall royal grace extol;
 Thus polish'd lines thy present fame enrol.

—But grant—

—Maliciously that Savage plung'd the steel,
 And made the youth its shining vengeance feel;
 My soul abhors the act, the man detests,
 But more the bigotry in priestly breasts.

GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE, May 1735.

miums

miums upon the purity and excellence of Mr. Savage's writings.

The prosecution, however, answered in some measure the purpose of those by whom it was set on foot; for Mr. Savage was so far intimidated by it, that, when the edition of his poem was sold, he did not venture to reprint it; so that it was in a short time forgotten, or forgotten by all but those whom it offended.

It is said, that some endeavours were used to incense the Queen against him: but he found advocates to obviate at least part of their effect; for though he was never advanced, he still continued to receive his pension.

This poem drew more infamy upon him than any incident of his life; and, as his conduct cannot be vindicated, it is proper to secure his memory from reproach, by informing those whom he made his enemies, that he never intended to repeat the provocation; and that, though, whenever he thought he had any reason to complain of the clergy, he used to threaten them with a new edition of *THE PROGRESS OF A DIVINE*, it was his calm and settled resolution to suppress it for ever.

He

He once intended to have made a better reparation for the folly or injustice with which he might be charged, by writing another poem, called, *THE PROGRESS OF A FREETHINKER*, whom he intended to lead through all the stages of vice and folly, to convert him from virtue to wickedness, and from religion to infidelity, by all the modish sophistry used for that purpose; and at last to dismiss him by his own hand into the other world.

That he did not execute this design is a real loss to mankind, for he was too well acquainted with all the scenes of debauchery to have failed in his representations of them, and too zealous for virtue not to have represented them in such a manner as should expose them either to ridicule or detestation.

But this plan was, like others, formed and laid aside, till the vigour of his imagination was spent, and the effervescence of invention had subsided; but soon gave way to some other design, which pleased by its novelty for a while, and then was neglected like the former.

He was still in his usual exigencies, having no certain support but the pension allowed him by the Queen, which, though it might have kept an exact oeconomist from want, was very far from being sufficient for Mr. Savage, who
had

had never been accustomed to dismiss any of his appetites without the gratification which they solicited, and whom nothing but want of money withheld from partaking of every pleasure that fell within his view.

His conduct with regard to his pension was very particular. No sooner had he changed the bill, than he vanished from the sight of all his acquaintances, and lay for some time out of the reach of all the enquiries that friendship or curiosity could make after him; at length he appeared again penniless as before, but never informed even those whom he seemed to regard most, where he had been, nor was his retreat ever discovered.

This was his constant practice during the whole time that he received the pension from the Queen: He regularly disappeared and returned. He indeed affirmed, that he retired to study, and that the money supported him in solitude for many months; but his friends declared, that the short time in which it was spent sufficiently confuted his own account of his conduct.

His politeness and his wit still raised him friends, who were desirous of setting him at length free from that indigence by which he had been hitherto oppressed; and therefore solicited

licited Sir Robert Walpole in his favour with so much earnestness, that they obtained a promise of the next place that should become vacant, not exceeding two hundred pounds a year. This promise was made with an uncommon declaration, "that it was not the promise of a minister to a petitioner, but of a friend to his friend."

Mr. Savage now concluded himself set at ease for ever, and, as he observes in a poem written on that incident of his life, trusted and was trusted; but soon found that his confidence was ill-grounded, and this friendly promise was not inviolable. He spent a long time in solicitations, and at last despaired and desisted.

He did not indeed deny that he had given the minister some reason to believe that he should not strengthen his own interest by advancing him, for he had taken care to distinguish himself in coffee-houses as an advocate for the ministry of the last years of Queen Anne, and was always ready to justify the conduct, and exalt the character of Lord Bolingbroke, whom he mentions with great regard in an epistle upon authors, which he wrote about that time, but was too wise to publish, and of which only some fragments have

have appeared, inserted by him in the MAGAZINE after his retirement.

To despair was not, however, the character of Savage; when one patronage failed, he had recourse to another. The prince was now extremely popular, and had very liberally rewarded the merit of some writers, whom Mr. Savage did not think superior to himself, and therefore he resolved to address a poem to him.

For this purpose he made choice of a subject, which could regard only persons of the highest rank and highest affluence, and which was therefore proper for a poem intended to procure the patronage of a prince; and having retired for some time to Richmond, that he might prosecute his design in full tranquillity, without the temptations of pleasure, or the solicitations of creditors, by which his meditations were in equal danger of being disconcerted, he produced a poem ON PUBLIC SPIRIT, WITH REGARD TO PUBLIC WORKS.

The plan of this poem is very extensive, and comprises a multitude of topics, each of which might furnish matter sufficient for a long performance, and of which some have already employed more eminent writers; but as he was perhaps not fully acquainted with the whole

whole extent of his own design, and was writing to obtain a supply of wants too pressing to admit of long or accurate enquiries, he passes negligently over many public works, which, even in his own opinion, deserved to be more elaborately treated.

But though he may sometimes disappoint his reader by transient touches upon these subjects, which have often been considered, and therefore naturally raise expectations, he must be allowed amply to compensate his omissions, by expatiating, in the conclusion of his work, upon a kind of beneficence not yet celebrated by any eminent poet, though it now appears more susceptible of embellishments, more adapted to exalt the ideas, and affect the passions, than many of those which have hitherto been thought most worthy of the ornaments of verse. The settlement of colonies in uninhabited countries, the establishment of those in security, whose misfortunes have made their own country no longer pleasing or safe, the acquisition of property without injury to any, the appropriation of the waste and luxuriant bounties of nature, and the enjoyment of those gifts which heaven has scattered upon regions uncultivated and unoccupied, cannot be considered without giving rise to a great number of pleasing ideas, and bewildering the imagination in delightful prospects; and, therefore, whatever speculations

tions they may produce in those who have confined themselves to political studies, naturally fixed the attention, and excited the applause, of a poet. The politician, when he considers men driven into other countries for shelter, and obliged to retire to forests and deserts, and pass their lives and fix their posterity in the remotest corners of the world, to avoid those hardships which they suffer or fear in their native place, may very properly enquire, why the legislature does not provide a remedy for these miseries, rather than encourage an escape from them. He may conclude, that the flight of every honest man is a loss to the community; that those who are unhappy without guilt ought to be relieved; and the life, which is overburthened by accidental calamities, set at ease by the care of the public; and that those, who have by misconduct forfeited their claim to favour, ought rather to be made useful to the society which they have injured, than be driven from it. But the poet is employed in a more pleasing undertaking than that of proposing laws, which, however just or expedient, will never be made, or endeavouring to reduce to rational schemes of government societies which were formed by chance, and are conducted by the private passions of those who preside in them. He guides the unhappy fugitive from want and persecution, to plenty, quiet, and security, and seats him

him in scenes of peaceful solitude, and undisturbed repose.

Savage has not forgotten, amidst the pleasing sentiments which this prospect of retirement suggested to him, to censure those crimes which have been generally committed by the discoverers of new regions, and to expose the enormous wickedness of making war upon barbarous nations because they cannot resist, and of invading countries because they are fruitful; of extending navigation only to propagate vice, and of visiting distant lands only to lay them waste. He has asserted the natural equality of mankind, and endeavoured to suppress that pride which inclines men to imagine that right is the consequence of power.

His description of the various miseries which force men to seek for refuge in distant countries, affords another instance of his proficiency in the important and extensive study of human life; and the tenderness with which he recounts them, another proof of his humanity and benevolence.

It is observable, that the close of this poem discovers a change which experience had made in Mr. Savage's opinions. In a poem written by him in his youth, and published in his Miscellanies, he declares his contempt of the contracted

tracted views and narrow prospects of the middle state of life, and declares his resolution either to tower like the cedar, or be trampled like the shrub; but in this poem, though addressed to a prince, he mentions this state of life as comprising those who ought most to attract reward, those who merit most the confidence of power, and the familiarity of greatness; and, accidentally mentioning this passage to one of his friends, declared, that in his opinion all the virtue of mankind was comprehended in that state.

In describing villas and gardens, he did not omit to condemn that absurd custom which prevails among the English, of permitting servants to receive money from strangers for the entertainment that they receive, and therefore inserted in his poem these lines;

But what the flowering pride of gardens rare,
However royal, or however fair,
If gates, which to access should still give way,
Ope but, like Peter's paradise, for pay?
If perquisited varlets frequent stand,
And each new walk must a new tax demand?
What foreign eye but with contempt surveys?
What Muse shall from oblivion snatch their
praise?

But

But before the publication of his performance he recollected, that the Queen allowed her garden and cave at Richmond to be shewn for money, and that she so openly countenanced the practice; that she had bestowed the privilege of shewing them as a place of profit on a man, whose merit she valued herself upon rewarding, though she gave him only the liberty of disgracing his country.

He therefore thought, with more prudence than was often exerted by him, that the publication of these lines might be officiously represented as an insult upon the Queen, to whom he owed his life and his subsistence; and that the propriety of his observation would be no security against the censures which the unseasonableness of it might draw upon him; he therefore suppressed the passage in the first edition, but after the Queen's death thought the same caution no longer necessary, and restored it to the proper place.

The poem was therefore published without any political faults, and inscribed to the Prince; but Mr. Savage, having no friend upon whom he could prevail to present it to him, had no other method of attracting his observation than the publication of frequent advertisements, and therefore received no re-

ward from his patron, however generous on other occasions.

This disappointment he never mentioned without indignation, being by some means or other confident that the Prince was not ignorant of his address to him; and insinuated, that, if any advances in popularity could have been made by distinguishing him, he had not written without notice, or without reward.

He was once inclined to have presented his poem in person, and sent to the printer for a copy with that design; but either his opinion changed, or his resolution deserted him, and he continued to resent neglect without attempting to force himself into regard.

Nor was the public much more favourable than his patron, for only seventy-two were sold, though the performance was much commended by some whose judgment in that kind of writing is generally allowed. But Savage easily reconciled himself to mankind without imputing any defect to his work, by observing that his poem was unluckily published two days after the prorogation of the parliament, and by consequence at a time when all those who could be expected to regard it were in the hurry of preparing for their departure, or engaged in

in taking leave of others upon their dismissal from public affairs.

It must be however allowed, in justification of the public, that this performance is not the most excellent of Mr. Savage's works; and that, though it cannot be denied to contain many striking sentiments, majestic lines, and just observations, it is in general not sufficiently polished in the language, or enlivened in the imagery, or digested in the plan.

Thus his poem contributed nothing to the alleviation of his poverty, which was such as very few could have supported with equal patience; but to which it must likewise be confessed, that few would have been exposed who received punctually fifty pounds a year; a salary which though by no means equal to the demands of vanity and luxury, is yet found sufficient to support families above want, and was undoubtedly more than the necessities of life require.

But no sooner had he received his pension, than he withdrew to his darling privacy, from which he returned in a short time to his former distress, and for some part of the year generally lived by chance, eating only when he was invited to the tables of his acquaintances, from which the meanness of his dress often excluded him, when the politeness and variety of his

conversation would have been thought a sufficient recompence for his entertainment.

He lodged as much by accident as he dined, and passed the night sometimes in mean houses, which are set open at night to any casual wanderers, sometimes in cellars among the riot and filth of the meanest and most profligate of the rabble; and sometimes, when he had not money to support even the expences of these receptacles, walked about the streets till he was weary, and lay down in the summer upon a bulk, or in the winter, with his associates in poverty, among the ashes of a glass-house.

In this manner were passed those days and those nights which nature had enabled him to have employed in elevated speculations, useful studies, or pleasing conversation. On a bulk, in a cellar, or in a glass-house among thieves and beggars, was to be found the Author of *THE WANDERER*, the man of exalted sentiments, extensive views, and curious observations; the man whose remarks on life might have assisted the statesman, whose ideas of virtue might have enlightened the moralist, whose eloquence might have influenced senates, and whose delicacy might have polished courts.

It cannot but be imagined that such necessities might sometimes force him upon disreputable

ble practices; and it is probable that these lines in *THE WANDERER* were occasioned by his reflections on his own conduct:

Though misery leads to happiness, and truth,
 Unequal to the load, this languid youth,
 (O, let none censure, if, untried by grief,
 If, amidst woe, untempted by relief,)
 He stoop'd reluctant to low arts of shame,
 Which then, ev'n then he scorn'd, and blush'd
 to name.

Whoever was acquainted with him was certain to be solicited for small sums, which the frequency of the request made in time considerable, and he was therefore quickly shunned by those who were become familiar enough to be trusted with his necessities; but his rambling manner of life, and constant appearance at houses of public resort, always procured him a new succession of friends, whose kindness had not been exhausted by repeated requests, so that he was seldom absolutely without resources, but had in his utmost exigences this comfort, that he always imagined himself sure of speedy relief.

It was observed, that he always asked favours of this kind without the least submission or apparent consciousness of dependence, and that he did not seem to look upon a compliance with
 his

his request as an obligation that deserved any extraordinary acknowledgments; but a refusal was resented by him as an affront, or complained of as an injury; nor did he readily reconcile himself to those who either denied to lend, or gave him afterwards any intimation that they expected to be repaid.

He was sometimes so far compassionated by those who knew both his merit and distresses, that they received him into their families, but they soon discovered him to be a very incommodious inmate; for, being always accustomed to an irregular manner of life, he could not confine himself to any stated hours, or pay any regard to the rules of a family, but would prolong his conversation till midnight, without considering that business might require his friend's application in the morning; and, when he had persuaded himself to retire to bed, was not, without equal difficulty, called up to dinner; it was therefore impossible to pay him any distinction without the entire subversion of all œconomy, a kind of establishment which, wherever he went, he always appeared ambitious to overthrow.

It must therefore be acknowledged, in justification of mankind, that it was not always by the negligence or coldness of his friends that Savage was distressed, but because it was in reality

reality very difficult to preserve him long in a state of ease. To supply him with money was a hopeless attempt, for no sooner did he see himself master of a sum sufficient to set him free from care for a day, than he became profuse and luxurious. When once he had entered a tavern, or engaged in a scheme of pleasure, he never retired till want of money obliged him to some new expedient. If he was entertained in a family, nothing was any longer to be regarded there but amusements and jollity; wherever Savage entered, he immediately expected that order and business should fly before him, that all should thenceforward be left to hazard, and that no dull principle of domestic management should be opposed to his inclination, or intrude upon his gaiety.

His distresses, however afflictive, never dejected him; in his lowest state he wanted not spirit to assert the natural dignity of wit, and was always ready to repress that insolence which superiority of fortune incited, and to trample on that reputation which rose upon any other basis than that of merit: he never admitted any gross familiarities, or submitted to be treated otherwise than as an equal. Once, when he was without lodging, meat, or cloaths, one of his friends, a man not indeed remarkable for moderation in his prosperity, left a message, that he desired to see him about nine in the morning.

ing. Savage knew that his intention was to assist him ; but was very much disgusted that he should presume to prescribe the hour of his attendance, and, I believe, refused to visit him, and rejected his kindness.

The same invincible temper, whether firmness or obstinacy, appeared in his conduct to the Lord Tyrconnel, from whom he very frequently demanded, that the allowance which was once paid him should be restored ; but with whom he never appeared to entertain for a moment the thought of soliciting a reconciliation, and whom he treated at once with all the haughtiness of superiority, and all the bitterness of resentment. He wrote to him, not in a style of supplication or respect, but of reproach, menace, and contempt ; and appeared determined, if he ever regained his allowance, to hold it only by the right of conquest.

As many more can discover, that a man is richer than that he is wiser than themselves, superiority of understanding is not so readily acknowledged as that of fortune ; nor is that haughtiness, which the consciousness of great abilities incites, borne with the same submission as the tyranny of affluence ; and therefore Savage, by asserting his claim to deference and regard, and by treating those with contempt whom better fortune animated to rebel against him,

him, did not fail to raise a great number of enemies in the different classes of mankind. Those who thought themselves raised above him by the advantages of riches, hated him because they found no protection from the petulance of his wit. Those who were esteemed for their writings feared him as a critic, and maligned him as a rival, and almost all the smaller wits were his professed enemies.

Among these Mr. Millar so far indulged his resentment as to introduce him in a farce, and direct him to be personated on the stage in a dress like that which he then wore; a mean insult, which only insinuated that Savage had but one coat, and which was therefore despised by him rather than resented; for though he wrote a lampoon against Millar, he never printed it: and as no other person ought to prosecute that revenge from which the person who was injured desisted, I shall not preserve what Mr. Savage suppressed; of which the publication would indeed have been a punishment too severe for so impotent an assault.

The great hardships of poverty were to Savage not the want of lodging or of food, but the neglect and contempt which it drew upon him. He complained, that as his affairs grew desperate, he found his reputation for capacity visibly decline; that his opinion in questions of criti-

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criticism was no longer regarded, when his coat was out of fashion; and that those who in the interval of his prosperity were always encouraging him to great undertakings by encomiums on his genius and assurances of success, now received any mention of his designs with coldness, thought that the subjects on which he proposed to write were very difficult, and were ready to inform him, that the event of a poem was uncertain, that an author ought to employ much time in the consideration of his plan, and not presume to sit down to write in confidence of a few cursory ideas, and a superficial knowledge; difficulties were started on all sides, and he was no longer qualified for any performance but **THE VOLUNTEER LAUREAT.**

Yet even this kind of contempt never depressed him; for he always preserved a steady confidence in his own capacity, and believed nothing above his reach which he should at any time earnestly endeavour to attain. He formed schemes of the same kind with regard to knowledge and to fortune, and flattered himself with advances to be made in science, as with riches, to be enjoyed in some distant period of his life. For the acquisition of knowledge he was indeed far better qualified than for that of riches; for he was naturally inquisitive and desirous of the conversation of those
from

from whom any information was to be obtained, but by no means solicitous to improve those opportunities that were sometimes offered of raising his fortune; and he was remarkably retentive of his ideas, which, when once he was in possession of them rarely forsook him; a quality which never could be communicated to his money.

While he was thus wearing out his life in expectation that the Queen would some time recollect her promise, he had recourse to the usual practice of writers, and published proposals for printing his works by subscription, to which he was encouraged by the success of many who had not a better right to the favour of the public; but, whatever was the reason, he did not find the world equally inclined to favour him; and he observed with some discontent, that, though he offered his works at half a guinea, he was able to procure but a small number in comparison with those who subscribed twice as much to Duck.

Nor was it without indignation that he saw his proposals neglected by the Queen, who patronised Mr. Duck's with uncommon ardour, and incited a competition among those who attended the court, who should most promote his interest, and who should first offer a subscription. This was a distinction
to

to which Mr. Savage made no scruple of asserting that his birth, his misfortunes, and his genius, gave him a fairer title, than could be pleaded by him on whom it was conferred.

Savage's applications were however not universally unsuccessful; for some of the nobility countenanced his design, encouraged his proposals, and subscribed with great liberality. He related of the Duke of Chandos particularly, that, upon receiving his proposals, he sent him ten guineas.

But the money which his subscriptions afforded him was not less volatile than that which he received from his other schemes; whenever a subscription was paid him he went to a tavern; and, as money so collected is necessarily received in small sums, he never was able to send his poems to the press, but for many years continued his solicitation, and squandered whatever he obtained.

This project of printing his works was frequently revived; and, as his proposals grew obsolete, new ones were printed with fresher dates. To form schemes for the publication was one of his favourite amusements; nor was he ever more at ease than when, with any friend who readily fell-in with his schemes, he
was

was adjusting the print, forming the advertisements, and regulating the dispersion of his new edition, which he really intended some time to publish, and which, as long as experience had shewn him the impossibility of printing the volume together, he at last determined to divide into weekly or monthly numbers, that the profits of the first might supply the expences of the next.

Thus he spent his time in mean expedients and tormenting suspense, living for the greatest part in the fear of prosecutions from his creditors, and consequently skulking in obscure parts of the town, of which he was no stranger to the remotest corners. But wherever he came, his address secured him friends, whom his necessities soon alienated; so that he had perhaps a more numerous acquaintance than any man ever before attained, there being scarcely any person eminent on any account to whom he was not known, or whose character he was not in some degree able to delineate.

To the acquisition of this extensive acquaintance every circumstance of his life contributed. He excelled in the arts of conversation, and therefore willingly practised them: He had seldom any home, or even a lodging in which he could be private; and therefore

was

was driven into public-houses for the common conveniences of life and supports of nature. He was always ready to comply with every invitation, having no employment to withhold him, and often no money to provide for himself; and by dining with one company, he never failed of obtaining an introduction into another.

Thus dissipated was his life, and thus casual his subsistence; yet did not the distraction of his views hinder him from reflection, nor the uncertainty of his condition depress his gaiety. When he had wandered about without any fortunate adventure by which he was led into a tavern, he sometimes retired into the fields, and was able to employ his mind in study, or amuse it with pleasing imaginations; and seldom appeared to be melancholy, but when some sudden misfortune had just fallen upon him, and even then in a few moments he would disentangle himself from his perplexity, adopt the subject of conversation, and apply his mind wholly to the objects that others presented to it.

This life, unhappy as it may be already imagined, was yet embittered, in 1738, with new calamities. The death of the Queen deprived him of all the prospects of preferment with which he so long entertained his imagination; and,

and, as Sir Robert Walpole had before given him reason to believe that he never intended the performance of his promise, he was now abandoned again to fortune.

He was however, at that time, supported by a friend: and as it was not his custom to look out for distant calamities, or to feel any other pain than that which forced itself upon his senses, he was not much afflicted at his loss, and perhaps comforted himself that his pension would be now continued without the annual tribute of a panegyric.

Another expectation contributed likewise to support him: he had taken a resolution to write a second tragedy upon the story of Sir Thomas Overbury, in which he preserved a few lines of his former play, but made a total alteration of the plan, added new incidents, and introduced new characters; so that it was a new tragedy, not a revival of the former.

Many of his friends blamed him for not making choice of another subject; but, in vindication of himself, he asserted, that it was not easy to find a better; and that he thought it his interest to extinguish the memory of the first tragedy, which he could only do by writing one less defective upon the same story; by which he should entirely defeat the artifice of the
the

the booksellers, who, after the death of any author of reputation, are always industrious to swell his works, by uniting his worst productions with his best.

In the execution of this scheme, however, he proceeded but slowly, and probably only employed himself upon it when he could find no other amusement; but he pleased himself with counting the profits, and perhaps imagined, that the theatrical reputation which he was about to acquire, would be equivalent to all that he had lost by the death of his patroness.

He did not, in confidence of his approaching riches, neglect the measures proper to secure the continuance of his pension, though some of his favourers thought him culpable for omitting to write on her death; but on her birthday next year, he gave a proof of the solidity of his judgement, and the power of his genius. He knew that the track of elegy had been so long beaten, that it was impossible to travel in it without treading in the footsteps of those who had gone before him; and that therefore it was necessary, that he might distinguish himself from the herd of encomiasts, to find out some new walk of funeral panegyric.

This difficult task he performed in such a manner, that his poem may be justly ranked
among

among the best pieces that the death of princes has produced. By transferring the mention of her death to her birth-day, he has formed a happy combination of topics, which any other man would have thought it very difficult to connect in one view, but which he has united in such a manner, that the relation between them appears natural: and it may be justly said, that what no other man would have thought on, it now appears scarcely possible for any man to miss.

The beauty of this peculiar combination of images is so masterly, that it is sufficient to set this poem above censure; and therefore it is not necessary to mention many other delicate touches which may be found in it, and which would deservedly be admired in any other performance.

To these proofs of his genius may be added, from the same poem, an instance of his prudence, an excellence for which he was not so often distinguished; he does not forget to remind the King, in the most delicate and artful manner, of continuing his pension.

With regard to the success of this address, he was for some time in suspense, but was in no great degree solicitous about it; and continued his labour upon his new tragedy with

great tranquillity, till the friend who had for a considerable time supported him, removing his family to another place, took occasion to dismiss him. It then became necessary to enquire more diligently what was determined in his affair, having reason to suspect that no great favour was intended him, because he had not received his pension at the usual time.

It is said, that he did not take those methods of retrieving his interest, which were most likely to succeed; and some of those who were employed in the Exchequer, cautioned him against too much violence in his proceedings; but Mr. Savage, who seldom regulated his conduct by the advice of others, gave way to his passion, and demanded of Sir Robert Walpole, at his levee, the reason of the distinction that was made between him and the other pensioners of the Queen, with a degree of roughness which perhaps determined him to withdraw what had been only delayed.

Whatever was the crime of which he was accused or suspected, and whatever influence was employed against him, he received soon after an account that took from him all hopes of regaining his pension; and he had now no prospect of subsistence but from his play, and he knew no way of living for the time required to finish it.

So

So peculiar were the misfortunes of this man, deprived of an estate and title by a particular law, exposed and abandoned by a mother, defrauded by a mother of a fortune which his father had allotted him, he entered the world without a friend; and though his abilities forced themselves into esteem and reputation, he was never able to obtain any real advantage, and whatever prospects arose were always intercepted as he began to approach them. The King's intentions in his favour were frustrated; his dedication to the Prince, whose generosity on every other occasion was eminent, procured him no reward; Sir Robert Walpole, who valued himself upon keeping his promise to others, broke it to him without regret; and the bounty of the Queen was, after her death, withdrawn from him, and from him only.

Such were his misfortunes, which yet he bore not only with decency, but with cheerfulness; nor was his gaiety clouded even by his last disappointments, though he was in a short time reduced to the lowest degree of distress, and often wanted both lodging and food. At this time he gave another instance of the insurmountable obstinacy of his spirit: his cloaths were worn out; and he received notice, that at a coffee-house some cloaths and linen were left for him: the person who

sent them, did not, I believe, inform him to whom he was to be obliged, that he might spare the perplexity of acknowledging the benefit; but though the offer was so far generous, it was made with some neglect of ceremonies, which Mr. Savage so much resented, that he refused the present, and declined to enter the house till the cloaths that had been designed for him were taken away.

His distress was now publicly known, and his friends, therefore, thought it proper to concert some measures for his relief; and one of them wrote a letter to him, in which he expressed his concern "for the miserable withdrawing of his pension;" and gave him hopes, that in a short time he should find himself supplied with a competence, "without any dependence on those little creatures which we are pleased to call the Great."

The scheme proposed for this happy and independent subsistence, was, that he should retire into Wales, and receive an allowance of fifty pounds a year, to be raised by a subscription, on which he was to live privately in a cheap place, without aspiring any more to affluence, or having any farther care of reputation.

This

This offer Mr. Savage gladly accepted, though with intentions very different from those of his friends; for they proposed that he should continue an exile from London for ever, and spend all the remaining part of his life at Swansea; but he designed only to take the opportunity, which their scheme offered him, of retreating for a short time, that he might prepare his play for the stage, and his other works for the press, and then to return to London to exhibit his tragedy, and live upon the profits of his own labour.

With regard to his works, he proposed very great improvements, which would have required much time, or great application; and when he had finished them, he designed to do justice to his subscribers, by publishing them according to his proposals.

As he was ready to entertain himself with future pleasures, he had planned out a scheme of life for the country, of which he had no knowledge but from pastorals and songs. He imagined that he should be transported to scenes of flowery felicity, like those which one poet has reflected to another; and had projected a perpetual round of innocent pleasures, of which he suspected no interruption from pride, or ignorance, or brutality.

With

With these expectations he was so enchanted, that when he was once gently reproached by a friend for submitting to live upon a subscription, and advised rather by a resolute exertion of his abilities to support himself, he could not bear to debar himself from the happiness which was to be found in the calm of a cottage, or lose the opportunity of listening without intermission, to the melody of the nightingale, which he believed was to be heard from every bramble, and which he did not fail to mention as a very important part of the happiness of a country life.

While this scheme was ripening, his friends directed him to take a lodging in the liberties of the Fleet, that he might be secure from his creditors, and sent him every Monday a guinea, which he commonly spent before the next morning, and trusted, after his usual manner, the remaining part of the week to the bounty of fortune.

He now began very sensibly to feel the miseries of dependence: Those by whom he was to be supported, began to prescribe to him with an air of authority, which he knew not how decently to resent, nor patiently to bear; and he soon discovered, from the conduct of most of his subscribers, that he was yet in the hands of "little creatures."

Of

Of the insolence that he was obliged to suffer, he gave many instances, of which none appeared to raise his indignation to a greater height, than the method which was taken of furnishing him with cloaths. Instead of consulting him, and allowing him to send a taylor his orders for what they thought proper to allow him, they proposed to send for a taylor to take his measure, and then to consult how they should equip him.

This treatment was not very delicate, nor was it such as Savage's humanity would have suggested to him on a like occasion; but it had scarcely deserved mention, had it not, by affecting him in an uncommon degree, shewn the peculiarity of his character. Upon hearing the design that was formed, he came to the lodging of a friend with the most violent agonies of rage; and, being asked what it could be that gave him such disturbance, he replied with the utmost vehemence of indignation, "That they had sent for a taylor to measure him."

How the affair ended was never enquired, for fear of renewing his uneasiness. It is probable, that, upon recollection, he submitted with a good grace to what he could not avoid, and that he discovered no resentment where he had no power.

He

He was, however, not humbled to implicit and universal compliance; for when the gentleman, who had first informed him of the design to support him by a subscription, attempted to procure a reconciliation with the Lord Tyrconnel, he could by no means be prevailed upon to comply with the measures that were proposed.

A letter was written for him * to Sir William Lemon, to prevail upon him to interpose his good offices with Lord Tyrconnel, in which he solicited Sir William's assistance, "for a man who really needed it as much as any man could well do;" and informed him, that he was retiring "for ever to a place where he should no more trouble his relations, friends, or enemies;" he confessed, that his passion had betrayed him to some conduct with regard to Lord Tyrconnel, "for which he could not but heartily ask his pardon;" and as he imagined Lord Tyrconnel's passion might be yet so high, that he would not "receive a letter from him," begged that Sir William would endeavour to soften him; and expressed his hopes that he would comply with his request, and that "so small a relation would not harden his heart against him."

* By Mr. Pope.

That any man should presume to dictate a letter to him, was not very agreeable to Mr. Savage; and therefore he was, before he had opened it, not much inclined to approve it. But when he read it, he found it contained sentiments entirely opposite to his own, and, as he asserted, to the truth; and therefore, instead of copying it, wrote his friend a letter full of masculine resentment and warm expostulations. He very justly observed, that the style was too supplicatory, and the representation too abject, and that he ought at least to have made him complain with "the dignity of a gentleman in distress." He declared that he would not write the paragraph in which he was to ask Lord Tyrconnel's pardon; for, "he despised his pardon, and therefore could not heartily, and would not hypocritically, ask it." He remarked, that his friend made a very unreasonable distinction between himself and him; for, says he, when you mention men of high rank "in your own character," they are, "those little creatures whom we are pleased to call the great;" but when you address them "in mine," no servility is sufficiently humble. He then with great propriety explained the ill consequences which might be expected from such a letter, which his relations would print in their own defence, and which would for ever be produced as a full answer to all that he should alledge against them;

them; for he always intended to publish a minute account of the treatment which he had received. It is to be remembered, to the honour of the gentleman by whom this letter was drawn up, that he yielded to Mr. Savage's reasons, and agreed that it ought to be suppressed.

After many alterations and delays, a subscription was at length raised which did not amount to fifty pounds a year, though twenty were paid by one gentleman; such was the generosity of mankind, that what had been done by a player without solicitation, could not now be effected by application and interest; and Savage had a great number to court and to obey for a pension less than that which Mrs. Oldfield paid him without exacting any servilities.

Mr. Savage however was satisfied, and willing to retire, and was convinced that the allowance, though scanty, would be more than sufficient for him, being now determined to commence a rigid œconomist, and to live according to the exactest rules of frugality; for nothing was in his opinion more contemptible than a man, who, when he knew his income, exceeded it; and yet he confessed, that instances of such folly were too common, and lamented

lamented that some men were not to be trusted with their own money.

Full of these salutary resolutions, he left London in July 1739, having taken leave with great tenderness of his friends, and parted from the author of this narrative with tears in his eyes. He was furnished with fifteen guineas, and informed, that they would be sufficient, not only for the expence of his journey, but for his support in Wales for some time; and that there remained but little more of the first collection. He promised a strict adherence to his maxims of parsimony, and went away in the stage-coach; nor did his friends expect to hear from him, till he informed them of his arrival at Swansea.

But when they least expected, arrived a letter dated the fourteenth day after his departure, in which he sent them word, that he was yet upon the road, and without money; and that he therefore could not proceed without a remittance. They then sent him the money that was in their hands, with which he was enabled to reach Bristol, from whence he was to go to Swansea by water.

At Bristol he found an embargo laid upon the shipping, so that he could not immediately

ately obtain a passage; and being therefore obliged to stay there some time, he, with his usual felicity, ingratiated himself with many of the principal inhabitants, was invited to their houses, distinguished at their public feasts, and treated with a regard that gratified his vanity, and therefore easily engaged his affection.

He began very early after his retirement to complain of the conduct of his friends in London, and irritated many of them so much by his letters, that they withdrew, however honourably, their contributions; and it is believed, that little more was paid him than the twenty pounds a year, which were allowed him by the gentleman who proposed the subscription.

After some stay at Bristol he retired to Swansea, the place originally proposed for his residence, where he lived about a year very much dissatisfied with the diminution of his salary; but contracted, as in other places, acquaintance with those who were most distinguished in that country, among whom he has celebrated Mr. Powel and Mrs. Jones, by some verses which he inserted in THE GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE *.

* Reprinted in his Works.

Here he compleated his tragedy, of which two acts were wanting when he left London, and was desirous of coming to town to bring it upon the stage. This design was very warmly opposed, and he was advised by his chief benefactor to put it into the hands of Mr. Thomson and Mr. Mallet, that it might be fitted for the stage, and to allow his friends to receive the profits, out of which an annual pension should be paid him.

This proposal he rejected with the utmost contempt. He was by no means convinced that the judgment of those, to whom he was required to submit, was superior to his own. He was now determined, as he expressed it, to be "no longer kept in leading-strings," and had no elevated idea of "his bounty, who proposed "to pension him out of the profits of his own "labours."

He attempted in Wales to promote a subscription for his works, and had once hopes of success; but in a short time afterwards formed a resolution of leaving that part of the country, to which he thought it not reasonable to be confined for the gratification of those, who, having promised him a liberal income, had no sooner banished him to a remote corner, than they reduced his allowance

ance to a salary scarcely equal to the necessities of life.

His resentment of this treatment, which, in his own opinion at least, he had not deserved, was such, that he broke off all correspondence with most of his contributors, and appeared to consider them as persecutors and oppressors; and in the latter part of his life declared, that their conduct toward him, since his departure from London, "had been perfidiousness im-
"proving on perfidiousness, and inhumanity
"on inhumanity."

It is not to be supposed, that the necessities of Mr. Savage did not sometimes incite him to satirical exaggerations of the behaviour of those by whom he thought himself reduced to them. But it must be granted, that the diminution of his allowance was a great hardship, and that those who withdrew their subscription from a man, who, upon the faith of their promise, had gone into a kind of banishment, and abandoned all those by whom he had been before relieved in his distresses, will find it no easy task to vindicate their conduct.

It may be alledged, and perhaps justly, that he was petulant and contemptuous, that he more frequently reproached his subscribers for
not

not giving him more, than thanked them for what he received; but it is to be remembered, that this conduct, and this is the worst charge that can be drawn up against him, did them no real injury; and that it therefore ought rather to have been pitied than resented, at least the resentment it might provoke ought to have been generous and manly; epithets which his conduct will hardly deserve that starves the man whom he has persuaded to put himself into his power.

It might have been reasonably demanded by Savage, that they should, before they had taken away what they promised, have replaced him in his former state, that they should have taken no advantages from the situation to which the appearance of their kindness had reduced him, and that he should have been recalled to London before he was abandoned. He might justly represent, that he ought to have been considered as a lion in the toils, and demand to be released before the dogs should be loosed upon him.

He endeavoured, indeed, to release himself, and, with an intent to return to London, went to Bristol, where a repetition of the kindness which he had formerly found invited him to stay. He was not only caressed and treated, but had a collection made for him of
about

about thirty pounds, with which it had been happy if he had immediately departed for London; but his negligence did not suffer him to consider, that such proofs of kindness were not often to be expected, and that this ardour of benevolence was in a great degree the effect of novelty, and might, probably, be every day less; and therefore he took no care to improve the happy time, but was encouraged by one favour to hope for another, till at length generosity was exhausted, and officiousness wearied.

Another part of his misconduct was the practice of prolonging his visits to unseasonable hours, and disconcerting all the families into which he was admitted. This was an error in a place of commerce which all the charms of his conversation could not compensate; for what trader would purchase such airy satisfaction by the loss of solid gain, which must be the consequence of midnight merriment, as those hours which were gained at night were generally lost in the morning?

Thus Mr. Savage, after the curiosity of the inhabitants was gratified, found the number of his friends daily decreasing, perhaps without suspecting for what reason their conduct was altered; for he still continued to harass, with his nocturnal intrusions, those that yet
coun-

countenanced him, and admitted him to their houses.

But he did not spend all the time of his residence at Bristol in visits or at taverns, for he sometimes returned to his studies, and began several considerable designs. When he felt an inclination to write, he always retired from the knowledge of his friends, and lay hid in an obscure part of the suburbs, till he found himself again desirous of company, to which it is likely that intervals of absence made him more welcome.

He was always full of his design of returning to London, to bring his tragedy upon the stage; but, having neglected to depart with the money that was raised for him, he could not afterwards procure a sum sufficient to defray the expences of his journey; nor perhaps would a fresh supply have had any other effect, than, by putting immediate pleasures in his power, to have driven the thoughts of his journey out of his mind.

While he was thus spending the day in contriving a scheme for the morrow, distress stole upon him by imperceptible degrees. His conduct had already wearied some of those who were at first enamoured of his conversation; but he might, perhaps, still have devolved to

others, whom he might have entertained with equal success, had not the decay of his cloaths made it no longer consistent with their vanity to admit him to their tables, or to associate with him in public places. He now began to find every man from home at whose house he called; and was therefore no longer able to procure the necessaries of life, but wandered about the town slighted and neglected, in quest of a dinner, which he did not always obtain.

To complete his misery, he was pursued by the officers for small debts which he had contracted; and was therefore obliged to withdraw from the small number of friends from whom he had still reason to hope for favours. His custom was to lie in bed the greatest part of the day, and to go out in the dark with the utmost privacy, and after having paid his visit return again before morning to his lodging, which was in the garret of an obscure inn.

Being thus excluded on one hand, and confined on the other, he suffered the utmost extremities of poverty, and often fasted so long that he was seized with faintness, and had lost his appetite, not being able to bear the smell of meat, till the action of his stomach was restored by a cordial.

In

In this distress he received a remittance of five pounds from London, with which he provided himself a decent coat, and determined to go to London, but unhappily spent his money at a favourite tavern. Thus was he again confined to Bristol, where he was every day hunted by bailiffs. In this exigence he once more found a friend, who sheltered him in his house, though at the usual inconveniences with which his company was attended; for he could neither be persuaded to go to bed in the night, nor to rise in the day.

It is observable, that in these various scenes of misery, he was always disengaged and cheerful: he at some times pursued his studies, and at others continued and enlarged his epistolary correspondence; nor was he ever so far dejected as to endeavour to procure an increase of his allowance by any other methods than accusations and reproaches.

He had now no longer any hopes of assistance from his friends at Bristol, who as merchants, and by consequence sufficiently studious of profit, cannot be supposed to have looked with much compassion upon negligence and extravagance, or to think any excellence equivalent to a fault of such consequence as neglect of oeconomy. It is natural to imagine, that many of those, who would have relieved his

real wants, were discouraged from the exertion of their benevolence by observation of the use which was made of their favours, and conviction that relief would only be momentary, and that the same necessity would quickly return.

At last he quitted the house of his friend, and returned to his lodging at the inn, still intending to set out in a few days for London; but on the 10th of January 1742-3, having been at supper with two of his friends, he was at his return to his lodgings arrested for a debt of about eight pounds, which he owed at a coffee-house, and conducted to the house of a sheriff's officer. The account which he gives of this misfortune, in a letter to one of the gentlemen with whom he had supped, is too remarkable to be omitted.

“ It was not a little unfortunate for me, that
“ I spent yesterday's evening with you; because
“ the hour hindered me from entering on my
“ new lodging; however, I have now got one,
“ but such an one, as I believe nobody would
“ chuse.

“ I was arrested at the suit of Mrs. Read,
“ just as I was going up stairs to bed, at Mr.
“ Bowyer's; but taken in so private a manner,
“ that I believe nobody at the White Lion is
“ apprised of it. Though I let the officers
“ know

“ know the strength (or rather weakness) of my
“ pocket, yet they treated me with the utmost
“ civility; and even when they conducted me
“ to confinement, it was in such a manner, that
“ I verily believe I could have escaped, which
“ I would rather be ruined than have done,
“ notwithstanding the whole amount of my
“ finances was but three pence halfpenny.

“ In the first place I must insist, that you will
“ industriously conceal this from Mrs. S—s,
“ because I would not have her goodnature
“ suffer that pain, which, I know, she would
“ be apt to feel on this occasion.

“ Next, I conjure you, dear Sir, by all the
“ ties of friendship, by no means to have one
“ uneasy thought on my account; but to have
“ the same pleasantry of countenance and un-
“ ruffled serenity of mind, which (God be prais-
“ ed!) I have in this, and have had in a much
“ severer calamity. Furthermore, I charge
“ you, if you value my friendship as truly as I
“ do yours, not to utter, or even harbour, the
“ least resentment against Mrs. Read. I believe
“ she has ruined me, but I freely forgive her;
“ and (though I will never more have any inti-
“ macy with her) I would, at a due distance,
“ rather do her an act of good, than ill will.
“ Lastly (pardon the expression), I absolutely
“ command you not to offer me any pecuniary
“ assist-

“ assistance, nor to attempt getting me any
“ from any one of your friends. At another
“ time, or on any other occasion, you may,
“ dear friend, be well assured, I would rather
“ write to you in the submissive style of a re-
“ quest, than that of a peremptory com-
“ mand.

“ However, that my truly valuable friend
“ may not think I am too proud to ask a fa-
“ vour, let me entreat you to let me have your
“ boy to attend me for this day, not only for
“ the sake of saving me the expence of porters,
“ but for the delivery of some letters to people
“ whose names I would not have known to
“ strangers.

“ The civil treatment I have thus far met
“ from those whose prisoner I am, makes me
“ thankful to the Almighty, that, though he
“ has thought fit to visit me (on my birth
“ night) with affliction, yet (such is his great
“ goodness!) my affliction is not without alle-
“ viating circumstances. I murmur not; but
“ am all resignation to the divine will. As to
“ the world, I hope that I shall be endued by
“ heaven with that presence of mind, that se-
“ rene dignity in misfortune, that constitutes
“ the character of a true nobleman; a dignity
“ far beyond that of coronets; a nobility aris-
“ ing from the just principles of philosophy,
“ refined

“refined and exalted by those of christi-
“nity.”——

He continued five days at the officer's, in hopes that he should be able to procure bail, and avoid the necessity of going to prison. The state in which he passed his time, and the treatment which he received, are very justly expressed by him in a letter which he wrote to a friend: “The whole day,” says he, “has been
“employed in various peoples’ filling my head
“with their foolish chimerical systems, which
“has obliged me coolly (as far as nature will
“admit) to digest, and accommodate myself
“to, every different person’s way of thinking;
“hurried from one wild system to another, till
“it has quite made a chaos of my imagination,
“and nothing done—promised—disappointed
“—ordered to send every hour, from one part
“of the town to the other.”——

When his friends, who had hitherto caressed and applauded, found that to give bail and pay the debt was the same, they all refused to preserve him from a prison, at the expence of eight pounds; and therefore, after having been for some time at the officer’s house, “at an immense expence,” as he observes in his letter, he was at length removed to Newgate.

This

This expence he was enabled to support by the generosity of Mr. Nash at Bath, who, upon receiving from him an account of his condition, immediately sent him five guineas, and promised to promote his subscription at Bath with all his interest.

By his removal to Newgate, he obtained at least a freedom from suspense, and rest from the disturbing vicissitudes of hope and disappointment; he now found that his friends were only companions, who were willing to share his gaiety, but not to partake of his misfortunes; and therefore he no longer expected any assistance from them.

It must however be observed of one gentleman, that he offered to release him by paying the debt, but that Mr. Savage would not consent, I suppose because he thought he had been before too burdensome to him.

He was offered by some of his friends, that a collection should be made for his enlargement; but he "treated the proposal," and declared, "he should again treat it, with disdain. "As to writing any mendicant letters, he had "too high a spirit, and determined only to "write to some ministers of state, to try to "regain his pension."

He

He continued to complain of those that had sent him into the country, and objected to them, that he had "lost the profits of his play " which had been finished three years;" and in another letter declares his resolution to publish a pamphlet, that the world might know how "he had been used."

This pamphlet was never written; for he in a very short time recovered his usual tranquillity, and chearfully applied himself to more inoffensive studies. He indeed steadily declared, that he was promised a yearly allowance of fifty pounds, and never received half the sum; but he seemed to resign himself to that as well as to other misfortunes, and lose the remembrance of it in his amusements and employments.

The chearfulness with which he bore his confinement appears from the following letter, which he wrote, January the 30th, to one of his friends in London:

" I now write to you from my confinement
" in Newgate, where I have been ever since
" Monday last was se'en-night, and where I
" enjoy myself with much more tranquillity
" than I have known for upwards of a twelve-
" month past; having a room entirely to my-
" self, and pursuing the amusement of my
" poetical

“poetical studies, uninterrupted, and agree-
“able to my mind. I thank the Almighty, I
“am now all collected in myself; and though
“my person is in confinement, my mind can
“expatiate on ample and useful subjects with
“all the freedom imaginable. I am now more
“conversant with the Nine than ever; and if,
“instead of a Newgate-bird, I may be allowed
“to be a bird of the Muses, I assure you, Sir,
“I sing very freely in my cage; sometimes
“indeed in the plaintive notes of the nightin-
“gale; but, at others, in the chearful strains
“of the lark.”—

In another letter he observes, that he ranges from one subject to another, without confining himself to any particular task; and that he was employed one week upon one attempt, and the next upon another.

Surely the fortitude of this man deserves, at least, to be mentioned with applause; and, whatever faults may be imputed to him, the virtue of suffering well cannot be denied him. The two powers which, in the opinion of Epic-tetus, constituted a wise man, are those of bearing and forbearing, which cannot indeed be affirmed to have been equally possessed by Savage; and indeed the want of one obliged him very frequently to practise the other.

He

He was treated by Mr. Dagg, the keeper of the prison, with great humanity; was supported by him at his own table without any certainty of recompense; had a room to himself, to which he could at any time retire from all disturbance; was allowed to stand at the door of the prison, and sometimes taken out into the fields; so that he suffered fewer hardships in prison than he had been accustomed to undergo in the greatest part of his life.

The keeper did not confine his benevolence to a gentle execution of his office, but made some overtures to the creditor for his release, though without effect; and continued, during the whole time of his imprisonment, to treat him with the utmost tenderness and civility.

Virtue is undoubtedly most laudable in that state which makes it most difficult; and therefore the humanity of a gaoler certainly deserves this public attestation; and the man, whose heart has not been hardened by such an employment, may be justly proposed as a pattern of benevolence. If an inscription was once engraved to the "honest toll-gatherer," less honours ought not to be paid "to the tender gaoler."

Mr.

Mr. Savage very frequently received visits, and sometimes presents, from his acquaintances; but they did not amount to a subsistence, for the greater part of which he was indebted to the generosity of this keeper; but these favours, however they might endear to him the particular persons from whom he received them, were very far from impressing upon his mind any advantageous ideas of the people of Bristol, and therefore he thought he could not more properly employ himself in prison, than in writing a poem called "London and Bristol delineated."

When he had brought this poem to its present state, which, without considering the chasm, is not perfect, he wrote to London an account of his design, and informed his friend, that he was determined to print it with his name: but enjoined him not to communicate his intention to his Bristol acquaintance. The gentleman, surprized at his resolution, endeavoured to dissuade him from publishing it, at least from prefixing his name; and declared, that he could not reconcile the injunction of secrecy with his resolution to own it at its first appearance. To this Mr. Savage returned an answer agreeable to his character in the following terms.

"I received

" I received yours this morning; and not
 " without a little surprize at the contents. To
 " answer a question with a question, you ask
 " me concerning London and Bristol, Why
 " will I add delineated? Why did Mr. Wool-
 " aston add the same word to his RELIGION
 " OF NATURE? I suppose that it was his will
 " and pleasure to add it in his case; and it is
 " mine to do so in my own. You are pleased
 " to tell me, that you understand not why se-
 " crecy is enjoined, and yet I intend to set my
 " name to it. My answer is—I have my pri-
 " vate reasons, which I am not obliged to ex-
 " plain to any one. You doubt my friend Mr.
 " S—— would not approve of it—And what
 " is it to me whether he does or not? Do you
 " imagine that Mr. S—— is to dictate to me?
 " If any man who calls himself my friend
 " should assume such an air, I would spurn at
 " his friendship with contempt. You say I
 " seem to think so by not letting him know it
 " —And suppose I do, what then? Perhaps I
 " can give reasons for that disapprobation, very
 " foreign from what you would imagine. You
 " go on in saying, Suppose I should not put
 " my name to it—My answer is, that I will
 " not suppose any such thing, being determin-
 " ed to the contrary: neither, Sir, would I have
 " you suppose, that I applied to you for want
 " of another press: nor would I have you ima-
 " gine,

"gine, that I owe Mr. S—— obligations which
"I do not."

Such was his imprudence, and such his obstinate adherence to his own resolutions, however absurd. A prisoner! supported by charity! and, whatever insults he might have received during the latter part of his stay in Bristol, once caressed, esteemed, and presented with a liberal collection, he could forget on a sudden his danger and his obligations, to gratify the petulance of his wit, or the eagerness of his resentment, and published a satire, by which he might reasonably expect, that he should alienate those who then supported him, and provoke those whom he could neither resist nor escape.

This resolution, from the execution of which, it is probable, that only his death could have hindered him, is sufficient to shew, how much he disregarded all considerations that opposed his present passions, and how readily he hazarded all future advantages for any immediate gratifications. Whatever was his predominant inclination, neither hope nor fear hindered him from complying with it; nor had opposition any other effect than to heighten his ardour, and irritate his vehemence.

This

This performance was however laid aside, while he was employed in soliciting assistance from several great persons; and one interruption succeeding another, hindered him from supplying the chasm, and perhaps from retouching the other parts, which he can hardly be imagined to have finished, in his own opinion; for it is very unequal, and some of the lines are rather inserted to rhyme to others, than to support or improve the sense; but the first and last parts are worked up with great spirit and elegance.

His time was spent in the prison for the most part in study, or in receiving visits; but sometimes he descended to lower amusements, and diverted himself in the kitchen with the conversation of the criminals; for it was not pleasing to him to be much without company; and though he was very capable of a judicious choice, he was often contented with the first that offered: for this he was sometimes reproved by his friends, who found him surrounded with felons; but the reproof was on that, as on other occasions, thrown away; he continued to gratify himself, and to set very little value on the opinion of others.

But here, as in every other scene of his life, he made use of such opportunities as occurred of besitting those who were more miserable than

than himself, and was always ready to perform any offices of humanity to his fellow-prisoners.

He had now ceased from corresponding with any of his subscribers except one, who yet continued to remit him the twenty pounds a year which he had promised him, and by whom it was expected, that he would have been in a very short time enlarged, because he had directed the keeper to enquire after the state of his debts.

However, he took care to enter his name according to the forms of the court, that the creditor might be obliged to make him some allowance, if he was continued a prisoner, and when on that occasion he appeared in the hall was treated with very unusual respect.

But the resentment of the city was afterwards raised by some accounts that hath been ^{had} spread of the satire, and he was informed that some of the merchants intended to pay the allowance which the law required, and to detain him a prisoner at their own expence. This he treated as an empty menace; and perhaps might have hastened the publication, only to shew how much he was superior to their insults, had not all his schemes been suddenly destroyed.

When

When he had been six months in prison, he received from one of his friends *, in whose kindness he had the greatest confidence, and on whose assistance he chiefly depended, a letter, that contained a charge of very atrocious ingratitude, drawn up in such terms as sudden resentment dictated. Mr. Savage returned a very solemn protestation of his innocence, but however appeared much disturbed at the accusation. Some days afterwards he was seized with a pain in his back and side, which, as it was not violent, was not suspected to be dangerous; but growing daily more languid and dejected, on the 25th of July he confined himself to his room, and a fever seized his spirits. The symptoms grew every day more formidable, but his condition did not enable him to procure any assistance. The last time that the keeper saw him was on July the 31st†; when Savage, seeing him at his bed-side, said, with an uncommon earnestness, "I have something to say to you, Sir;" but, after a pause, moved his hand in a melancholy manner; and, finding himself unable to recollect what he was going to communicate, said, "Tis gone!" The keeper soon after left him; and the next morning he died. He was buried in the church-yard of St. Peter, at the expence of the keeper.

* Mr. Pope.

† In 1743.

Such were the life and death of Richard Savage, a man equally distinguished by his virtues and vices; and at once remarkable for his weaknesses and abilities.

He was of a middle stature, of a thin habit of body, a long visage, coarse features, and melancholy aspect; of a grave and manly deportment, a solemn dignity of mien; but which, upon a nearer acquaintance, softened into an engaging easiness of manners. His walk was slow, and his voice tremulous and mournful. He was easily excited to smiles, but very seldom provoked to laughter.

His mind was in an uncommon degree vigorous and active. His judgement was accurate, his apprehension quick, and his memory so tenacious, that he was frequently observed to know what he had learned from others in a short time, better than those by whom he was informed; and could frequently recollect incidents, with all their combination of circumstances, which few would have regarded at the present time, but which the quickness of his apprehension impressed upon him. He had the peculiar felicity, that his attention never deserted him; he was present to every object, and regardful of the most trifling occurrences. He had the art of escaping from his

own

own reflections, and accommodating himself to every new scene.

To this quality is to be imputed the extent of his knowledge, compared with the small time which he spent in visible endeavours to acquire it. He mingled in cursory conversation with the same steadiness of attention as others apply to a lecture; and, amidst the appearance of thoughtless gaiety, lost no new idea that was started, nor any hint that could be improved. He had therefore made in coffee-houses the same proficiency as in other studies; and it is remarkable, that the writings of a man of little education and little reading have an air of learning scarcely to be found in any other performances, but which perhaps as often obscures as embellishes them.

His judgement was eminently exact both with regard to writings and to men. The knowledge of life was indeed his chief attainment, and it is not without some satisfaction, that I can produce the suffrage of Savage in favour of human nature, of which he never appeared to entertain such odious ideas as some, who perhaps had neither his judgement nor experience, have published, either in ostentation of their sagacity, vindication of their crimes, or gratification of their malice.

His method of life particularly qualified him for conversation, of which he knew how to practise all the graces. He was never vehement or loud, but at once modest and easy, open and respectful; his language was vivacious and elegant, and equally happy upon grave or humorous subjects. He was generally censured for not knowing when to retire; but that was not the defect of his judgement, but of his fortune; when he left his company, he was frequently to spend the remaining part of the night in the street, or at least was abandoned to gloomy reflections, which it is not strange that he delayed as long as he could; and sometimes forgot that he gave others pain to avoid it himself.

It cannot be said, that he made use of his abilities for the direction of his own conduct: an irregular and dissipated manner of life had made him the slave of every passion that happened to be excited by the presence of its object, and that slavery to his passions reciprocally produced a life irregular and dissipated. He was not master of his own motions, nor could promise any thing for the next day.

With regard to his oeconomy, nothing can be added to the relation of his life: He appeared to think himself born to be supported by others, and dispensed from all necessity of providing

providing for himself; he therefore never prosecuted any scheme of advantage, nor endeavoured even to secure the profits which his writings might have afforded him. His temper was, in consequence of the dominion of his passions, uncertain and capricious; he was easily engaged, and easily disgusted: but he is accused of retaining his hatred more tenaciously than his benevolence.

rages

He was compassionate both by nature and principle, and always ready to perform offices of humanity; but when he was provoked (and very small offences were sufficient to provoke him), he would prosecute his revenge with the utmost acrimony till his passion had subsided.

His friendship was therefore of little value; for though he was zealous in the support or vindication of those whom he loved, yet it was always dangerous to trust him, because he considered himself as discharged by the first quarrel from all ties of honour or gratitude; and would betray those secrets which, in the warmth of confidence, had been imparted to him. This practice drew upon him an universal accusation of ingratitude: nor can it be denied that he was very ready to set himself free from the load of an obligation; for he could not bear to conceive himself in a state of dependence,

pendence, his pride being equally powerful with his other passions, and appearing in the form of insolence at one time, and of vanity at another. Vanity, the most innocent species of pride, was most frequently predominant: He could not easily leave off, when he had once begun to mention himself or his works; nor ever read his verses without stealing his eyes from the page, to discover, in the faces of his audience, how they were affected with any favourite passage.

A kinder name than that of vanity ought to be given to the delicacy with which he was always careful to separate his own merit from every other man's, and to reject that praise to which he had no claim. He did not forget, in mentioning his performances, to mark every line that had been suggested or amended; and was so accurate, as to relate that he owed three words in *THE WANDERER* to the advice of his friends.

His veracity was questioned, but with little reason; his accounts, though not indeed always the same, were generally consistent. When he loved any man, he suppressed all his faults; and, when he had been offended by him, concealed all his virtues: But his characters were generally true, so far as he proceeded; though it cannot be denied, that his partiality

partiality might have sometimes the effect of falsehood.

In cases indifferent he was zealous for virtue, truth, and justice: he knew very well the necessity of goodness to the present and future happiness of mankind; nor is there perhaps any writer, who has less endeavoured to please by flattering the appetites, or perverting the judgement.

As an author, therefore, and he now ceases to influence mankind in any other character, if one piece which he had resolved to suppress be excepted, he has very little to fear from the strictest moral or religious censure. And though he may not be altogether secure against the objections of the critic, it must however be acknowledged, that his works are the productions of a genius truly poetical; and, what many writers who have been more lavishly applauded cannot boast, that they have an original air, which has no resemblance of any foregoing writer; that the versification and sentiments have a cast peculiar to themselves, which no man can imitate with success, because what was nature in Savage, would in another be affectation. It must be confessed, that his descriptions are striking, his images animated, his fictions justly imagined, and his allegories artfully pursued; that his diction is
elevated,

elevated, though sometimes forced, and his numbers sonorous and majestic, though frequently sluggish and encumbered. Of his style, the general fault is harshness, and its general excellence is dignity; of his sentiments the prevailing beauty is sublimity, and uniformity the prevailing defect.

For his life, or for his writings, none, who candidly consider his fortune, will think an apology either necessary or difficult. If he was not always sufficiently instructed in his subject, his knowledge was at least greater than could have been attained by others in the same state. If his works were sometimes unfinished, accuracy cannot reasonably be exacted from a man oppressed with want, which he has no hope of relieving but by a speedy publication. The insolence and resentment of which he is accused were not easily to be avoided by a great mind, irritated by perpetual hardships, and constrained hourly to return the spurns of contempt, and repress the insolence of prosperity; and vanity may surely readily be pardoned in him, to whom life afforded no other comforts than barren praises, and the consciousness of deserving them.

Those are no proper judges of his conduct, who have slumbered away their time on the down of affluence; nor will any wise man presume

sume to say, " Had I been in Savage's condition, I should have lived or written better than Savage."

This relation will not be wholly without its use, if those, who languish under any part of his sufferings, shall be enabled to fortify their patience, by reflecting that they feel only those afflictions from which the abilities of Savage did not exempt him; or those, who, in confidence of superior capacities or attainments, disregard the common maxims of life, shall be reminded, that nothing will supply the want of prudence; and that negligence and irregularity, long continued, will make knowledge useless, wit ridiculous, and genius contemptible.

S O M E R V I L E.

OF Mr. SOMERVILE's life I am not able to say any thing that can satisfy curiosity.

He was a gentleman whose estate was in Warwickshire; his house is called Edston, a feat inherited from a long line of ancestors; for he was said to be of the first family in his country. He tells of himself, that he was born near the Avon's banks. He was bred at Winchester-school, but I know not whether he was of any university. I have never heard of him but as of a poet, a country gentleman, and a skilful and useful Justice of the Peace.

Of the close of his life, those whom his poems have delighted will read with pain the following account, copied from the Letters of his friend Shenstone, by whom he was too much resembled.

“ —Our old friend Somervile is dead! I
“ did not imagine I could have been so sorry
“ as

“ as I find myself on this occasion.—*Sublatum*
 “ *querimus*. I can now excuse all his foibles;
 “ impute them to age, and to distress of cir-
 “ cumstances: the last of these considerations
 “ wrings my very soul to think on. For a
 “ man of high spirit, conscious of having (at
 “ least in one production) generally pleased
 “ the world, to be plagued and threatened by
 “ wretches that are low in every sense; to be
 “ forced to drink himself into pains of the
 “ body, in order to get rid of the pains of the
 “ mind, is a misery.”—He died July 14, 1743.

It is with regret that I find myself not better enabled to exhibit memorials of a writer, who at least must be allowed to have set a good example to men of his own class, by devoting part of his time to elegant knowledge; and who has shewn, by the subjects which his poetry has adorned, that it is practicable to be at once a skilful sportsman and a man of letters.

The compilers of this collection have neglected the order of time, and placed those pieces first which were written last. The Occasional Poems were published long before his *Chase*.

Somerville has tried many modes of poetry; and though perhaps he has not in any reached

ed such excellence as to raise much envy, it may commonly be said at least, that *he writes very well for a gentleman*. His serious pieces are sometimes elevated, and his trifles are sometimes elegant. In his verses to Addison the couplet which mentions *Clio* is written with the most exquisite delicacy of praise; it exhibits one of those happy strokes that are seldom attained. In his Odes to Marlborough there are beautiful lines; but in the second Ode he shews that he knew little of his hero, when he talks of his private virtues. His subjects are such as require no great depth of thought or energy of expression. His Fables are generally stale, and therefore excite no curiosity. Of his favourite, *The Two Springs*, the fiction is unnatural, and the moral inconsequential. In his Tales there is too much coarseness, with too little care of language, and not sufficient rapidity of narration.

His great work is his *Chase*, which he undertook in his maturer age, when his ear was improved to the approbation of blank verse, of which however his two first lines give a bad specimen. To this poem praise cannot totally be denied. He is allowed by sportsmen to write with great intelligence of his subject, which is the first requisite to excellence; and though it is impossible to interest the common readers of verse in the dangers or pleasures of
the

the chase, he has done all that transition and variety could easily effect; and has, with great propriety, enlarged his plan by the modes of hunting used in other countries.

With still less judgement did he chuse blank verse as the vehicle of *Rural Sports*. If blank verse be not tumid and gorgeous, it is crippled prose; and familiar images in laboured language have nothing to recommend them but absurd novelty, which wanting the attractions of Nature, cannot please long. One excellence of the *Splendid Shilling* is, that it is short. Disguise can gratify no longer than it deceives.

T H O M S O N.

JAMES THOMSON, the son of a minister well esteemed for his piety and diligence, was born September 7, 1700, at Ednam, in the shire of Roxburgh, of which his father was pastor. His mother, whose name was Hume, inherited as co-heiress a portion of a small estate. The revenue of a parish in Scotland is seldom large; and it was probably in commiseration of the difficulty with which Mr. Thomson supported his family, having nine children, that Mr. Riccarton, a neighbouring minister, discovering in James uncommon promises of future excellence, undertook to superintend his education, and provide him books.

He was taught the common rudiments of learning at the school of Jedburg, a place which he delights to recollect in his poem of *Autumn*; but was not considered by his master as superior to common boys, though in those early days he amused his patron and his friends with poetical compositions; with which however he so little pleased himself, that on every new-year's

year's day he threw into the fire all the productions of the foregoing year.

From school he was removed to Edinburgh, where he had not resided two years when his father died, and left all his children to the care of their mother, who raised upon her little estate what money a mortgage could afford, and, removing with her family to Edinburgh, lived to see her son rising into eminence.

The design of Thomson's friends was to breed him a minister. He lived at Edinburgh, as at school, without distinction or expectation, till, at the usual time, he performed a probationary exercise by explaining a psalm. His diction was so poetically splendid, that Mr. Hamilton, the professor of Divinity, reproved him for speaking language unintelligible to a popular audience, and he censured one of his expressions as indecent, if not profane.

This rebuke is reported to have repressed his thoughts of an ecclesiastical character, and he probably cultivated with new diligence his blossoms of poetry, which however were in some danger of a blast; for, submitting his productions to some who thought themselves qualified to criticise, he heard of nothing but faults, but, finding other judges more favourable, he did not suffer himself to sink into despondence.

He

He easily discovered that the only stage on which a poet could appear, with any hope of advantage, was London; a place too wide for the operation of petty competition and private malignity, where merit might soon become conspicuous, and would find friends as soon as it became reputable to befriend it. A lady, who was acquainted with his mother, advised him to the journey, and promised some countenance or assistance, which at last he never received; however he justified his adventure by her encouragement, and came to seek in London patronage and fame.

At his arrival he found his way to Mr. Mallet, then tutor to the sons of the duke of Montrose. He had recommendations to several persons of consequence, which he had tied up carefully in his handkerchief; but as he passed along the street, with the gaping curiosity of a new-comer, his attention was upon every thing rather than his pocket, and his magazine of credentials was stolen from him.

His first want was of a pair of shoes. For the supply of all his necessities, his whole fund was his *Winter*, which for a time could find no purchaser; till, at last, Mr. Millan was persuaded to buy it at a low price; and this low price he had for some time reason to regret; but, by accident, Mr. Whatley, a man not wholly unknown among authors, happening to

turn his eye upon it, was so delighted that he ran from place to place celebrating its excellence. Thomson obtained likewise the notice of Aaron Hill, whom, being friendless and indigent, and glad of kindness, he courted with every expression of servile adulation.

Winter was dedicated to Sir Spencer Compton, but attracted no regard from him to the author; till Aaron Hill awakened his attention by some verses addressed to Thomson, and published in one of the newspapers, which censured the great for their neglect of ingenious men. Thomson then received a present of twenty guineas, of which he gives this account to Mr. Hill:

“ I hinted to you in my last, that on Saturday morning I was with Sir Spencer Compton. A certain gentleman, without my desire, spoke to him concerning me; his answer was, that I had never come near him. Then the gentleman put the question, If he desired that I should wait on him? he returned, he did. On this, the gentleman gave me an introductory Letter to him. He received me in what they commonly call a civil manner; asked me some common-place questions, and made me a present of twenty guineas. I am very ready to own that the present was larger than my performance deserved; and shall ascribe it to his generosity, or any other

“other cause, rather than the merit of the
“address.”

The poem, which, being of a new kind, few would venture at first to like, by degrees gained upon the publick; and one edition was very speedily succeeded by another.

Thomson's credit was now high, and every day brought him new friends; among others Dr. Rundle, a man afterwards unfortunately famous, sought his acquaintance, and found his qualities such, that he recommended him to the lord chancellor Talbot.

Winter was accompanied, in many editions, not only with a preface and a dedication, but with poetical praises by Mr. Hill, Mr. Mallet (then *Mallock*), and *Mira*, the fictitious name of a lady once too well known. Why the dedications are, to *Winter* and the other seasons, contrarily to custom, left out in the collected works, the reader may enquire.

The next year (1727) he distinguished himself by three publications; of *Summer*, in pursuance of his plan; of a *Poem on the Death of Sir Isaac Newton*, which he was enabled to perform as an exact philosopher by the instruction of Mr. Gray; and of *Britannia*, a kind of poetical invective against the ministry, whom the nation then thought not forward enough

in resenting the depredations of the Spaniards. By this piece he declared himself an adherent to the opposition, and had therefore no favour to expect from the Court.

Thomson, having been some time entertained in the family of the lord Binning, was desirous of testifying his gratitude by making him the patron of his *Summer*; but the same kindness which had first disposed lord Binning to encourage him, determined him to refuse the dedication, which was by his advice addressed to Mr. Doddington; a man who had more power to advance the reputation and fortune of a poet.

Spring was published next year, with a dedication to the countess of Hertford; whose practice it was to invite every Summer some poet into the country, to hear her verses, and assist her studies. This honour was one Summer conferred on Thomson, who took more delight in carousing with lord Hertford and his friends than assisting her ladyship's poetical operations, and therefore never received another summons.

Autumn, the season to which the *Spring* and *Summer* are preparatory, still remained unsung, and was delayed till he published (1730) his works collected.

He

He produced in 1727 the tragedy of *Sophonisba*, which raised such expectation, that every rehearsal was dignified with a splendid audience, collected to anticipate the delight that was preparing for the publick. It was observed however that nobody was much affected, and that the company rose as from a moral lecture.

It had upon the stage no unusual degree of success. Slight accidents will operate upon the taste of pleasure. There was a feeble line in the play;

O Sophonisba, Sophonisba, O!

This gave occasion to a waggish parody;

O, Jemmy Thomson, Jemmy Thomson, O!

which for a while was echoed through the town.

I have been told by Savage, that of the Prologue to *Sophonisba* the first part was written by Pope, who could not be persuaded to finish it, and that the concluding lines were added by Mallet.

Thomson was not long afterwards, by the influence of Dr. Rundle, sent to travel with Mr. Charles Talbot, the eldest son of the Chancellor. He was yet young enough to receive new impressions, to have his opinions rectified, and his views enlarged; nor can he be supposed

posed to have wanted that curiosity which is inseparable from an active and comprehensive mind. He may therefore now be supposed to have revelled in all the joys of intellectual luxury; he was every day feasted with instructive novelties; he lived splendidly without expence, and might expect when he returned home a certain establishment.

At this time a long course of opposition to Sir Robert Walpole had filled the nation with clamours for liberty, of which no man felt the want, and with care for liberty, which was not in danger. Thomson, in his travels on the continent, found or fancied so many evils arising from the tyranny of other governments, that he resolved to write a very long poem, in five parts, upon Liberty.

While he was busy on the first book, Mr. Talbot died; and Thomson, who had been rewarded for his attendance by the place of secretary of the Briefs, pays in the initial lines a decent tribute to his memory.

Upon this great poem two years were spent, and the author congratulated himself upon it as his noblest work; but an author and his reader are not always of a mind. *Liberty* called in vain upon her votaries to read her praises and reward her encomiast: her praises were condemned to harbour spiders, and to gather dust;

duft; none of Thomson's performances were so little regarded.

The judgement of the publick was not erroneous; the recurrence of the same images must tire in time; an enumeration of examples to prove a position which nobody denied, as it was from the beginning superfluous, must quickly grow disgusting.

The poem of *Liberty* does not now appear in its original state; but when the author's works were collected, after his death, was shortened by Sir George Lyttelton, with a liberty which, as it has a manifest tendency to lessen the confidence of society, and to confound the characters of authors, by making one man write by the judgement of another, cannot be justified by any supposed propriety of the alteration, or kindness of the friend.—I wish it had been exhibited in the Collection as its author left it.

Thomson now lived in ease and plenty, and seems for a while to have suspended his poetry; but he was soon called back to labour by the death of the Chancellor, for his place then became vacant; and though the Lord Hardwicke delayed for some time to give it away, Thomson's bashfulness, or pride, or some other motive perhaps not more laudable, withheld him

him from soliciting; and the new Chancellor would not give him what he would not ask.

He now relapsed to his former indigence; but the prince of Wales was at that time struggling for popularity, and by the influence of Mr. Lyttelton professed himself the patron of wit: to him Thomson was introduced, and being gaily interrogated about the state of his affairs, said, *that they were in a more poetical posture than formerly*; and had a pension allowed him of one hundred pounds a year.

Being now obliged to write, he produced (1738) the tragedy of *Agamemnon*, which was much shortened in the representation. It had the fate which most commonly attends mythological stories, and was only endured, but not favoured. It struggled with such difficulty through the first night, that Thomson, coming late to his friends with whom he was to sup, excused his delay by telling them how the sweat of his distress had so disordered his wig, that he could not come till he had been refitted by a barber.

He so interested himself in his own drama, that, if I remember right, as he sat in the upper gallery he accompanied the players by audible recitation, till a friendly hint frightened him to silence. Pope countenanced *Agamemnon*, by coming to it the first night.

About

About this time the Act was passed for licensing plays, of which the first operation was the prohibition of *Gustavus Vasa*, a tragedy of Mr. Brooke, whom the publick recompensed by a very liberal subscription; the next was the refusal of *Edward and Eleonora*, offered by Thomson. It is hard to discover why either play should have been obstructed. Thomson likewise endeavoured to repair his loss by a subscription, of which I cannot now tell the success.

When the publick murmured at the unkind treatment of Thomson, one of the ministerial writers remarked, *that he had taken a Liberty which was not agreeable to Britannia in any Season.*

He was soon after employed, in conjunction with Mr. Mallet, to write the masque of *Alfred*, which was acted before the Prince at Cliefden-house.

His next work (1745) was *Tancred and Sigismunda*, the most successful of all his tragedies; for it still keeps its turn upon the stage. He seems not to be, either by the bent of nature or habits of study, much qualified for tragedy. It does not appear that he had much sense of the pathetick, and his diffusive and descriptive stile produced declamation rather than dialogue.

His

His friend Mr. Lyttelton was now in power, and conferred upon him the office of surveyor-general of the Leeward Islands; from which, when his deputy was paid, he received about three hundred pounds a year.

The last piece that he lived to publish was the *Castle of Indolence*, which was many years under his hand, but was at last finished with great accuracy. The first canto opens a scene of lazy luxury, that fills the imagination.

He was now at ease, but was not long to enjoy it; for, by taking cold on the water between London and Kew, he caught a disorder, which, with some careless exasperation, ended in a fever that put an end to his life, August 27, 1748. He was buried in the church of Richmond, without an inscription; but a monument has been erected to his memory in Westminster-abbey.

Thomson was of stature above the middle size, and *more fat than hard besseems*, of a dull countenance, and a gross, unanimated, uninviting appearance; silent in mingled company, but chearful among select friends, and by his friends very tenderly and warmly beloved.

He left behind him the tragedy of *Coriolanus*, which was, by the zeal of his patron Sir George Lyttelton, brought upon the stage for the

the benefit of his family, and recommended by a Prologue, which Quin, who had long lived with Thomson in fond intimacy, spoke in such a manner as shewed him *to be*, on that occasion, *no actor*. The commencement of this benevolence is very honourable to Quin; who is reported to have delivered Thomson, then known to him only for his genius, from an arrest, by a very considerable present; and its continuance is honourable to both; for friendship is not always the sequel of obligation. By this tragedy a considerable sum was raised, of which part discharged his debts, and the rest was remitted to his sisters, whom, however removed from them by place or condition, he regarded with great tenderness, as will appear by the following Letter, which I communicate with much pleasure, as it gives me at once an opportunity of recording the fraternal kindness of Thomson, and reflecting on the friendly assistance of Mr. Boswell, from whom I received it.

“ Hagly in Worcestershire,

“ October the 4th, 1747.

“ My dear Sister,

“ I thought you had known me better than
 “ to interpret my silence into a decay of affection,
 “ especially as your behaviour has always
 “ been such as rather to increase than diminish
 “ it. Don’t imagine, because I am a bad correspondent,
 “ that I can ever prove an unkind friend and brother. I must do myself the
 “ justice

" justice to tell you, that my affections are
" naturally very fixed and constant; and if I
" had ever reason of complaint against you (of
" which by the bye I have not the least sha-
" dow), I am conscious of so many defects in
" myself, as dispose me to be not a little chari-
" table and forgiving.

" It gives me the truest heart-felt satisfacti-
" on to hear you have a good kind husband,
" and are in easy contented circumstances; but
" were they otherwise, that would only awak-
" en and heighten my tenderness towards you.
" As our good and tender-hearted parents did
" not live to receive any material testimonies
" of that highest human gratitude I owed them
" (than which nothing could have given me
" equal pleasure), the only return I can make
" them now is by kindness to those they left
" behind them: would to God poor Lizzy had
" lived longer, to have been a farther witness
" of the truth of what I say, and that I might
" have had the pleasure of seeing once more a
" sister, who so truly deserved my esteem and
" love. But she is happy, while we must toil
" a little longer here below: let us however do
" it cheerfully and gratefully, supported by the
" pleasing hope of meeting yet again on a safer
" shore, where to recollect the storms and diffi-
" culties of life will not perhaps be inconsistent
" with that blissful state. You did right to call
" your daughter by her name; for you must
" needs

“ needs have had a particular tender friend-
 “ ship for one another, endeared as you were by
 “ nature, by having past the affectionate years
 “ of your youth together; and by that great
 “ softer and engager of hearts, mutual hard-
 “ ship. That it was in my power to ease it a
 “ little, I account one of the most exquisite
 “ pleasures of my life.—But enough of this
 “ melancholy though not unpleasing strain.

“ I esteem you for your sensible and disin-
 “ terested advice to Mr. Bell, as you will see
 “ by my Letter to him: as I approve intirely
 “ of his marrying again, you may readily ask
 “ me why I don't marry at all. My circum-
 “ stances have hitherto been so variable and
 “ uncertain in this fluctuating world as in-
 “ duce to keep me from engaging in such a
 “ state: and now, though they are more set-
 “ tled, and of late (which you will be glad to
 “ hear) considerably improved, I begin to
 “ think myself too far advanced in life for
 “ such youthful undertakings, not to mention
 “ some other petty reasons that are apt to
 “ startle the delicacy of difficult old batchelors.
 “ I am, however, not a little suspicious that
 “ was I to pay a visit to Scotland (of which I
 “ have some thoughts of doing soon) I might
 “ possibly be tempted to think of a thing not
 “ easily repaired, if done amiss. I have al-
 “ ways been of opinion that none make better
 “ wives than the ladies of Scotland; and yet,
 “ who

“ who more forsaken than they, while the
 “ gentlemen are continually running abroad all
 “ the world over? Some of them, it is true,
 “ are wise enough to return for a wife. You
 “ see I am beginning to make interest already
 “ with the Scots ladies.—But no more of this
 “ infectious subject.—Pray let me hear from
 “ you now-and-then; and though I am not
 “ a regular correspondent, yet perhaps I may
 “ mend in that respect. Remember me kindly
 “ to your husband, and believe me to be,

“ Your most affectionate brother,

(Signed) “ JAMES THOMSON.”

(Addressed) “ To Mrs. Thomson in Lanark.”

The benevolence of Thomson was fervid, but not active; he would give, on all occasions, what assistance his purse would supply; but the offices of intervention or solicitation he could not conquer his sluggishness sufficiently to perform. The affairs of others, however, were not more neglected than his own. He had often felt the inconveniences of idleness, but he never cured it; and was so conscious of his own character, that he talked of writing an Eastern Tale of *the Man who loved to be in Distress*.

Among his peculiarities was a very unskilful and inarticulate manner of pronouncing any lofty or solemn composition. He was once
 reading

reading to Doddington, who, being himself a reader eminently elegant, was so much provoked by his odd utterance, that he snatched the paper from his hand, and told him that he did not understand his own verses.

The biographer of Thomson has remarked, that an author's Life is best read in his works: his observation was not well-timed. Savage, who lived much with Thomson, once told me, how he heard a lady remarking that she could gather from his works three parts of his character, "that he was a *great Lover, a great Swimmer, and rigorously abstinent*; but, said Savage, he knows not any love but that of the sex; he was perhaps never in cold water in his life; and he indulges himself in all the luxury that comes within his reach. Yet Savage always spoke with the most eager praise of his social qualities, his warmth and constancy of friendship, and his adherence to his first acquaintance when the advancement of his reputation had left them behind him.

As a writer, he is entitled to one praise of the highest kind; his mode of thinking, and of expressing his thoughts, is original. His blank verse is no more the blank verse of Milton, or of any other poet, than the rhymes of Prior are the rhymes of Cowley. His numbers, his pauses, his diction, are of his own growth, without transcription, without imitation.

tion. He thinks in a peculiar train, and he thinks always as a man of genius; he looks round on Nature and on Life, with the eye which Nature bestows only on a poet; the eye that distinguishes, in every thing presented to its view, whatever there is on which imagination can delight to be detained, and with a mind that at once comprehends the vast, and attends to the minute. The reader of the *Seasons* wonders that he never saw before what Thomson shews him, and that he never yet has felt what Thomson impresses.

His is one of the works in which blank verse seems properly used; Thomson's wide expansion of general views, and his enumeration of circumstantial varieties, would have been obstructed and embarrassed by the frequent interfections of the sense, which are the necessary effects of rhyme.

His descriptions of extended scenes and general effects bring before us the whole magnificence of Nature, whether pleasing or dreadful. The gaiety of *Spring*, the splendour of *Summer*, the tranquillity of *Autumn*, and the horror of *Winter*, take in their turns possession of the mind. The poet leads us through the appearances of things as they are successively varied by the vicissitudes of the year, and imparts to us so much of his own enthusiasm, that our thoughts expand with his imagery,
and

and kindle with his sentiments. Nor is the naturalist without his part in the entertainment; for he is assisted to recollect and to combine, to arrange his discoveries, and to amplify the sphere of his contemplation.

The great defect of the *Seasons* is want of method; but for this I know not that there was any remedy. Of many appearances subsisting all at once, no rule can be given why one should be mentioned before another; yet the memory wants the help of order, and the curiosity is not excited by suspense or expectation.

His diction is in the highest degree florid and luxuriant, such as may be said to be to his images and thoughts *both their lustre and their shade*; such as invests them with splendour, through which perhaps they are not always easily discerned. It is too exuberant, and sometimes may be charged with filling the ear more than the mind.

These Poems, with which I was acquainted at their first appearance, I have since found altered and enlarged by subsequent revisions, as the author supposed his judgement to grow more exact, and as books or conversation extended his knowledge and opened his prospects. They are, I think, improved in general; yet I know not whether they have not

lost part of what Temple calls their *race*; a word which, applied to wines, in its primitive sense, means the flavour of the soil.

Liberty, when it first appeared, I tried to read, and soon desisted. I have never tried again, and therefore will not hazard either praise or censure.

PROLOGUE

PROLOGUE TO SOPHONISBA,

BY POPE AND MALLET.

WHEN Learning, after the long Gothic night,
Fair, o'er the Western world, renew'd its light,
With arts arising, Sophonisba rose:
The Tragic Muse, returning, wept her woes.
With her th' Italian scene first learn'd to glow;
And the first tears for her were taught to flow.
Her charms the Gallic Muses next inspir'd:
Corneille himself saw, wonder'd, and was fir'd.

What foreign theatres with pride have shewn,
Britain, by juster title, makes her own.
When Freedom is the cause, 'tis hers to fight;
And hers, when Freedom is the theme, to write.
For this a British Author bids again
The heroine rise, to grace the British scene.
Here, as in life, she breathes her genuine flame:
She asks, what bosom has not felt the same?
Asks of the British Youth—Is silence there?
She dares to ask it of the British Fair.

To-night, our home-spun author would be true,
At once, to nature, history, and you.
Well pleas'd to give our neighbours due applause,
He owns their learning, but disdains their laws.

Not to his patient touch, or happy flame,
'Tis to his British heart he trusts for fame.
If France excel him in one free-born thought,
The man, as well as poet, is in fault.

Nature! informer of the poet's art,
Whose force alone can raise or melt the heart,
Thou art his guide; each passion, every line,
Whate'er he draws to please, must all be thine.
Be thou his judge: in every candid breast,
Thy silent whisper is the sacred test.

H A M M O N D.

OF Mr. HAMMOND, though he be well remembered as a man esteemed and caressed by the elegant and great, I was at first able to obtain no other memorials than such as are supplied by a book called *Cibber's Lives of the Poets*; of which I take this opportunity to testify that it was not written, nor, I believe, ever seen, by either of the Cibbers; but was the work of Robert Shiels, a native of Scotland, a man of very acute understanding, though with little scholastick education, who, not long after the publication of his work, died in London of a consumption. His life was virtuous, and his end was pious. Theophilus Cibber, then a prisoner for debt, imparted as I was told, his name for ten guineas. The manuscript of Shiels is now in my possession.

I have since found that Mr. Shiels, though he was no negligent enquirer, has been misled
by

by false accounts; for he relates that James Hammond, the author of the *Elegies*, was the son of a Turkey merchant, and had some office at the prince of Wales's court, till love of a lady, whose name was Dashwood, for a time disordered his understanding. He was unextinguishably amorous, and his mistress inexorably cruel.

Of this narrative part is true, and part false. He was the second son of Anthony Hammond, a man of note among the wits, poets, and parliamentary orators in the beginning of this century, who was allied to Sir Robert Walpole by marrying his sister. He was born about 1710, and educated at Westminster-school; but it does not appear that he was of any university. He was equerry to the prince of Wales, and seems to have come very early into publick notice, and to have been distinguished by those whose patronage and friendship prejudiced mankind at that time in favour of those on whom they were bestowed; for he was the companion of Cobham, Lyttelton, and Chesterfield. He is said to have divided his life between pleasure and books; in his retirement forgetting the town, and in his gaiety losing the student. Of his literary hours all the effects are exhibited in the *Collection*, of which the *Elegies* were written very

very early, and the Prologue not long before his death.

In 1741, he was chosen into parliament for Truro in Cornwall, probably one of those who were elected by the Prince's influence; and died next year in June at Stowe, the famous seat of the lord Cobham. His mistress long out-lived him, and in 1779 died unmarried. The character which her lover bequeathed her was, indeed, not likely to attract courtship.

The Elegies were published after his death; and while the writer's name was remembered with fondness, they were read with a resolution to admire them. The commendatory preface of the editor, who was then believed, and is now affirmed by Dr. Maty, to be the earl of Chesterfield, raised strong prejudices in their favour.

But of the prefacer, whoever he was, it may be reasonably suspected that he never read the poems; for he professes to value them for a very high species of excellence, and recommends them as the genuine effusions of the mind, which express a real passion in the language of nature. But the truth is, these elegies have neither passion, nature, nor manners. Where there is fiction, there is no passion;

sion; he that describes himself as a shepherd, and his Neæra or Delia as a shepherdess, and talks of goats and lambs, feels no passion. He that courts his mistress with Roman imagery deserves to lose her; for she may with good reason suspect his sincerity. Hammond has few sentiments drawn from nature, and few images from modern life. He produces nothing but frigid pedantry. It would be hard to find in all his productions three stanzas that deserve to be remembered.

Like other lovers, he threatens the lady with dying, and what then shall follow?

Wilt thou in tears thy lover's corse attend;
 With eyes averted light the solemn pyre,
 Till all around the doleful flames ascend,
 Then, slowly sinking, by degrees expire?
 To sooth the hovering soul be thine the care,
 With plaintive cries to lead the mournful band.
 In fable weeds the golden vase to bear,
 And cull my ashes with thy trembling hand:
 Panchaia's odours be their costly feast,
 And all the pride of Asia's fragrant year,
 Give them the treasures of the farthest East,
 And, what is still more precious, give thy tear.

Surely no blame can fall upon the nymph who rejected a swain of so little meaning.

His verses are not rugged, but they have no sweetness; they never glide in a stream of melody. Why Hammond or other writers have

have thought the quatrain of ten syllables elegiac, it is difficult to tell. The character of the Elegy is gentleness and tenuity; but this stanza has been pronounced by Dryden, whose knowledge of English metre was not inconsiderable, to be the most magnificent of all the measures which our language affords.

THE following Elegy was accidentally omitted:

TO MISS DASHWOOD.

In the Manner of OVID.

O say, thou dear possessor of my breast,
Where's now my boasted liberty and rest !
Where the gay moments which I once have known !
O, where that heart I fondly thought my own !
From place to place I solitary roam,
Abroad uneasy, not content at home.
I scorn the beauties common eyes adore ;
The more I view them, feel thy worth the more ;
Unmov'd I hear them speak, or see them fair,
And only think on thee, who art not there.
In vain would books their formal succour lend,
Nor wit nor wisdom can relieve their friend ;
Wit can't deceive the pain I now endure,
And wisdom shews the ill without the cure.
When from thy sight I waste the tedious day,
A thousand schemes I form, and things to say ;
But when thy presence gives the time I seek,
My heart's so full, I wish, but cannot speak.

And could I speak with eloquence and ease,
Till now not studious of the art to please,
Could I, at woman who so oft exclaim,
Expose (nor blush) thy triumph and my shame,
Abjure those maxims I so lately priz'd,
And court that sex I foolishly despis'd,

And

Own thou hast soften'd my obdurate mind,
 And thus reveng'd the wrongs of womankind ;
 Lost were my words, and fruitless all my pain,
 In vain to tell thee, all I write in vain ;
 My humble sighs shall only reach thy ears,
 And all my eloquence shall be my tears.

And now (for more I never must pretend)
 Hear me not as thy lover, but thy friend ;
 Thousands will fain thy little heart ensnare,
 For without danger none like thee are fair ;
 But wisely choose who best deserves thy flame,
 So shall the choice itself become thy fame ;
 Nor yet despise, though void of winning art,
 The plain and honest courtship of the heart :
 The skilful tongue in love's persuasive lore,
 Tho' less it feels, will please and flatter more,
 And, meanly learned in that guilty trade,
 Can long abuse a fond, unthinking maid.
 And since their lips, so knowing to deceive,
 Thy unexperienc'd youth might soon believe ;
 And since their tears, in false submission drest,
 Might thaw the icy coldness of thy breast ;
 O ! shut thine eyes to such deceitful woes :
 Caught by the beauty of thy outward show,
 Like me they do not love, whate'er they seem,
 Like me—with passion founded on esteem.

C O L L I N S.

WILLIAM COLLINS was born at Chichester on the twenty-fifth of December, about 1720. His father was a hatter of good reputation. He was in 1733, as Dr. Warton has kindly informed me, admitted scholar of Winchester College, where he was educated by Dr. Burton. His English exercises were better than his Latin.

He first courted the notice of the publick by some verses to a *Lady weeping*, published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*.

In 1740, he stood first in the list of the scholars to be received in succession at New College; but unhappily there was no vacancy. This was the original misfortune of his life. He became a Commoner of Queen's College, probably with a scanty maintenance; but was in about half a year elected a *Demy* of Magdalen College, where he continued till he had
taken

taken a Bachelor's degree, and then suddenly left the University; for what reason I know not that he told.

He now (about 1744) came to London a literary adventurer, with many projects in his head, and very little money in his pocket. He designed many works; but his great fault was irresolution, or the frequent calls of immediate necessity broke his schemes, and suffered him to pursue no settled purpose. A man, doubtful of his dinner, or trembling at a creditor, is not much disposed to abstracted meditation, or remote enquiries. He published proposals for a History of the Revival of Learning; and I have heard him speak with great kindness of Leo the Tenth, and with keen resentment of his tasteless successor. But probably not a page of the History was ever written. He planned several tragedies, but he only planned them. He wrote now-and-then odes and other poems, and did something, however little.

About this time I fell into his company. His appearance was decent and manly; his knowledge considerable, his views extensive, his conversation elegant, and his disposition cheerful. By degrees I gained his confidence; and one day was admitted to him when he was immured by a bailiff, that was prowling in the street.

street. On this occasion recourse was had to the booksellers, who, on the credit of a translation of Aristotle's Poeticks, which he engaged to write with a large commentary, advanced as much money as enabled him to escape into the country. He shewed me the guineas safe in his hand. Soon afterwards his uncle, Mr. Martin, a lieutenant-colonel, left him about two thousand pounds; a sum which Collins could scarcely think exhaustible, and which he did not live to exhaust. The guineas were then repaid, and the translation neglected.

But man is not born for happiness. Collins, who, while he *studied to live*, felt no evil but poverty, no sooner *lived to study* than his life was assailed by more dreadful calamities, disease and insanity.

Having formerly written his character, while perhaps it was yet more distinctly impressed upon my memory, I shall insert it here.

“ Mr. Collins was a man of extensive literature, and of vigorous faculties. He was acquainted not only with the learned tongues, but with the Italian, French, and Spanish languages. He had employed his mind chiefly upon works of fiction, and subjects of fancy;
and

and by indulging some peculiar habits of thought, was eminently delighted with those flights of imagination which pass the bounds of nature, and to which the mind is reconciled only by a passive acquiescence in popular traditions. He loved fairies, genii, giants, and monsters; he delighted to rove through the meanders of enchantment, to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces, to repose by the water-falls of Elysian gardens.

“ This was however the character rather of his inclination than his genius; the grandeur of wildness, and the novelty of extravagance, were always desired by him, but were not always attained. Yet as diligence is never wholly lost; if his efforts sometimes caused harshness and obscurity, they likewise produced in happier moments sublimity and splendour. This idea which he had formed of excellence, led him to oriental fictions and allegorical imagery; and perhaps, while he was intent upon description, he did not sufficiently cultivate sentiment. His poems are the productions of a mind not deficient in fire, nor unfurnished with knowledge either of books or life, but somewhat obstructed in its progress by deviation in quest of mistaken beauties.

“ His

" His morals were pure, and his opinions pious: in a long continuance of poverty, and long habits of dissipation, it cannot be expected that any character should be exactly uniform. There is a degree of want by which the freedom of agency is almost destroyed; and long association with fortuitous companions will at last relax the strictness of truth, and abate the fervour of sincerity. That this man, wise and virtuous as he was, passed always unentangled through the snares of life, it would be prejudice and temerity to affirm; but it may be said that at least he preserved the source of action unpolluted, that his principles were never shaken, that his distinctions of right and wrong were never confounded, and that his faults had nothing of malignity or design, but proceeded from some unexpected pressure, or casual temptation.

" The latter part of his life cannot be remembered but with pity and sadness. He languished some years under that depression of mind which enchains the faculties without destroying them, and leaves reason the knowledge of right without the power of pursuing it. These clouds which he perceived gathering on his intellects, he endeavoured to disperse by travel, and passed into France; but

found himself constrained to yield to his malady, and returned. He was for some time confined in a house of lunatics, and afterwards retired to the care of his sister in Chichester, where death in 1756 came to his relief.

“ After his return from France, the writer of this character paid him a visit at Islington, where he was waiting for his sister, whom he had directed to meet him: there was then nothing of disorder discernible in his mind by any but himself; but he had withdrawn from study, and travelled with no other book than an English Testament, such as children carry to the school: when his friend took it into his hand, out of curiosity to see what companion a Man of Letters had chosen, *I have but one book*, says Collins, *but that is the best.*”

Such was the fate of Collins, with whom I once delighted to converse, and whom I yet remember with tenderness.

He was visited at Chichester, in his last illness, by his learned friends Dr. Warton and his brother; to whom he spoke with disapprobation of his Oriental Eclogues, as not sufficiently expressive of Asiatick manners, and

and called them his Irish Eclogues. He shewed them, at the same time, an ode inscribed to Mr. John Hume, on the superstitions of the Highlands; which they thought superior to his other works, but which no search has yet found.

His disorder was not alienation of mind, but general laxity and feebleness, a deficiency rather of his vital than intellectual powers. What he spoke wanted neither judgement nor spirit; but a few minutes exhausted him, so that he was forced to rest upon the couch, till a short cessation restored his powers, and he was again able to talk with his former vigour.

The approaches of this dreadful malady he began to feel soon after his uncle's death; and, with the usual weakness of men so diseased, eagerly snatched that temporary relief with which the table and the bottle flatter and seduce. But his health continually declined, and he grew more and more burthensome to himself.

To what I have formerly said of his writings may be added, that his diction was often harsh, unskilfully laboured, and injudiciously selected. He affected the obsolete when it

was not worthy of revival; and he puts his words out of the common order, seeming to think, with some later candidates for fame, that not to write prose is certainly to write poetry. His lines commonly are of flow motion, clogged and impeded with clusters of consonants. As men are often esteemed who cannot be loved, so the poetry of Collins may sometimes extort praise when it gives little pleasure.

Mr.

Mr. Collins's first production is added here
from the *Poetical Calendar* :

TO MISS AURELIA C—R,

ON HER WEEPING AT HER SISTER'S WEDDING.

Cease, fair Aurelia, cease to mourn,
Lament not Hannah's happy state;
You may be happy in your turn,
And seize the treasure you regret.

With Love united Hymen stands,
And softly whispers to your charms;
“Meet but your lover in my bands,
“You'll find your sister in his arms.”

NO. 2 1841

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
ASTOR LENOX TILDEN FOUNDATION

TO MISS ALBION C. TILDEN

NEW YORK, 1841

My dear Miss Tilden,
I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst. in relation to the loan of the book of the "History of the State of New York," which I have the pleasure to inform you is now in the hands of the Librarian, and will be sent to you as soon as it is received.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. M. Smith

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst. in relation to the loan of the book of the "History of the State of New York," which I have the pleasure to inform you is now in the hands of the Librarian, and will be sent to you as soon as it is received.

Yours very respectfully,
J. M. Smith

Y O U N G.

THE following Life was written at my request, by a gentleman who had better information than I could easily have obtained; and the publick will perhaps wish that I had solicited and obtained more such favours from him.

“ Dear Sir,

In consequence of our different conversations about authentic materials for the Life of Young, and in consequence of your fears lest, for want of proper information, you might say any thing of the father which should hurt the son, I send you the following detail. It is not, I confess, immediately in the line of my profession; but hard indeed is our fate at the bar, if we may not call a few our hours now-
and-then our own. *of*

Of great men something must always be said to gratify curiosity. Of the great author
of

of the *Night Thoughts* much has been told of which there never could have been proofs; and little care appears to have been taken to tell that of which proofs, with little trouble, might have been procured.

EDWARD YOUNG was born at Upham, near Winchester, in June 1681. He was the son of Edward Young, at that time Fellow of Winchester College and Rector of Upham; who was the son of Jo. Young of Woodhay in Berkshire, styled by Wood *gentleman*. In September 1682 the Poet's father was collated to the prebend of Gillingham Minor, in the church of Sarum, by bishop Ward. On the childishness of Ward, his duties were necessarily performed by others. We learn from Wood, that, at a visitation of Sprat, July the 12th, 1686, the Prebendary preached a Latin sermon, afterwards published, with which the Bishop was so pleased, that he told the Chapter he was concerned to find the preacher had one of the worst prebends in their church. In consequence of his merit and reputation, or of the interest of Lord Bradford (to whom, in 1702, he dedicated two volumes of sermons), he was some time after, appointed chaplain to King William and Queen Mary, and preferred to the deanry of Sarum. Jacob, who wrote in 1720, says, he was chaplain and clerk of the closet to the late Queen, who

who honoured him by standing godmother to the Poet. His fellowship of Winchester he resigned in favour of one Mr. Harris, who married his only daughter. The Dean died at Sarum, after a short illness, in 1705, in the sixty-third year of his age. On the Sunday after his decease Bishop Burnet preached at the cathedral, and began his sermon with saying, "Death has been of late walking round us, and making breach upon breach upon us, and has now carried away the head of this body with a stroke; so that he, whom you saw a week ago distributing the holy mysteries is now laid in the dust. But he still lives in the many excellent directions he has left us, both how to live and how to die."

The Dean placed his son upon the foundation at Winchester College, where he had himself been educated. At this school Edward Young remained till the election after his eighteenth birth-day, the period at which those upon the foundation are superannuated. Whether he did not betray his abilities early in life, or his masters had not skill enough to discover in their pupil any marks of genius for which he merited reward, or no vacancy at Oxford afforded them an opportunity to bestow upon the reward provided for merit by William of Wykeham; certain it is, that to an
Oxford

Oxford fellowship our Poet did not succeed. By chance, or by choice, New College does not number among its Fellows him who wrote the *Night Thoughts*.

On the 13th of October, 1703, he was entered an Independent Member of New College, that he might live at little expence in the Warden's lodgings, who was a particular friend of his father, till he should be qualified to stand for a fellowship at All-souls. In a few months the Warden of New College died. He then removed to Corpus. The President of this College, from a regard also for his father, invited him thither, in order to lessen his academical expences. In 1708 he was nominated to a law fellowship at All-souls by Archbishop Tennison, into whose hands it came by devolution.---Such repeated patronage, while it justifies Burnet's praise of the father, reflects credit on the conduct of the son. The manner in which it was exerted seems to prove that the father did not leave behind him much wealth.

On the 23d of April 1714, Young took his degree of Batchelor of Civil Laws, and his Doctor's degree on the 10th of June 1719.

Soon

Soon after he was elected at All-souls he discovered, it is said, an inclination to take pupils. Whether he ever commenced tutor is not known. None has hitherto boasted to have received his academical instruction from the author of the *Night Thoughts*. It is certain that his college was proud of him no less as a scholar than as a poet; for, in 1716, when the foundation of Codrington Library was laid, two years after he had taken his Bachelor's degree, he was appointed to speak the Latin oration, which is at least particular for being dedicated in English *To the Ladies of the Codrington Family*. To these he says, that "he was unavoidably flung into a singularity, by being obliged to write an epistle-dedicatory void of common-place, and such an one as was never published before by any author whatever;—that this practice absolved them from any obligation of reading what was presented to them;—and that the bookseller approved of it, because it would make people stare, was absurd enough, and perfectly right." Of this oration there is no appearance in his own edition of his works; and prefixed to an edition by Curll and Tonson, in 1741, is a letter from Young to Curll (if Curll may be credited), dated December the 9th, 1739, wherein he says he has not leisure to review what he formerly wrote, and adds, "I have not the *Epistle to Lord Lansdowne*. If you will take my
" advice,

"advice, I would have you omit that, and the oration on *Codrington*. I think the collection will sell better without them."

There are who relate, that, when first Young found himself independent, and his own master at All-souls, he was not the ornament to religion and morality which he afterwards became. The authority of his father, indeed, had ceased by his death in 1705; and Young was certainly not ashamed to be patronized by the infamous Wharton. But Wharton befriended in Young, perhaps, the poet, and particularly the tragedian. If virtuous authors must be patronized only by virtuous peers, who shall point them out?

Yet Pope is said by Ruffhead to have told Warburton, that "Young had much of a sublime genius, though without common sense; so that his genius, having no guide, was perpetually liable to degenerate into bombast. This made him, pass a *foolish youth*, the sport of peers and poets: but his having a very good heart enabled him to support the clerical character when he assumed it, first with decency, and afterwards with honour."

They who think ill of Young's morality in the early part of his life, may perhaps be wrong, but Tindal could not err in his opinion
of

of Young's warmth and ability in the cause of religion. Tindal used to spend much of his time at All-souls. "The other boys," said the atheist, "I can always answer, because "I always know whence they have their arguments, which I have read an hundred times; but that fellow Young is continually "pestering me with something of his own." After all, Tindal and the censurers of Young may be reconcileable. Young might, for two or three years, have tried that kind of life, in which his natural principles would not suffer him to wallow long. If this were so, he has left behind him not only his evidence in favour of virtue, but the potent testimony of experience against vice.

Young perhaps ascribed the good fortune of Addison to the *Poem to his Majesty*, presented, with a copy of verses, to Somers; and hoped that he also might soar to wealth and honours on wings of the same kind. His first poetical flight was when Queen Anne called up to the House of Lords the sons of the Earls of Northampton and Aylesbury, and added, in one day, ten others to the number of Peers. In order to reconcile the people to one at least of the new Lords, he published in 1712 *An Epistle to the Right Honourable George Lord Lansdowne*. In this composition the poet pours out his panegyrick with the extravagance of a
young

young man, who thinks his present stock of wealth will never be exhausted.

The poem seems intended also to reconcile the publick to the late peace. This is endeavoured to be done by shewing that men are slain in war, and that in peace *harvests wave and commerce swells her sail*. If this be humanity, it is not politicks. Another purpose of this epistle appears to have been to prepare the publick for the reception of some tragedy of his own. His Lordship's patronage, he says, will not let him *repent his passion for the stage*;—and the particular praise bestowed on *Othello* and *Oroonoko* seems to shew that some such character as *Zanga* was even then in contemplation. The affectionate mention of the death of his friend Harrison of New College, at the close of this poem, is an instance of Young's art, which displayed itself so fully thirty years afterwards in the *Night Thoughts*, of making the publick a party in his private sorrow.

Should justice call upon you to censure this poem, it ought at least to be remembered that he did not insert it in his works; and that in the letter to Curll, as we have seen, he advises its omission. The booksellers, in the present Body of English Poetry, should have distinguished what was deliberately rejected by the respective authors. This I shall be careful to do

do with regard to Young. "I think," says he, "the following pieces in *four* volumes to be "the most excusable of all that I have written; and I wish *less apology* was needful for "these. As there is no recalling what is got "abroad, the pieces here republished I have "revised and corrected, and rendered them as "pardonable as it was in my power to do."— Shall the gates of repentance be shut only against literary sinners?

When Addison published *Cato* in 1713, Young had the honour of prefixing to it a commendatory copy of verses. This is one of the pieces which the author of the *Night Thoughts* did not republish.

On the appearance of his *Poem on the Last Day*, Addison did not return Young's compliment; but *The Englishman* of October 29, 1713, which was probably written by Addison, speaks handsomely of this poem. The *Last Day* was published soon after the peace. The vice-chancellor's *imprimatur* (for it was first printed at Oxford) is dated May the 19th, 1713. From the Exordium Young appears to have spent some time on the composition of it. While other bards *with Britain's hero set their souls on fire*, he draws, he says, a deeper scene. Marlborough *had been* considered by Britain as her *hero*; but, when the *Last Day* was

was published, female cabal had blasted for a time the laurels of Blenheim. This poem was probably finished by Young as early as 1710; for part of it is printed in the *Tatler*. It was inscribed to the Queen, in a dedication, which, for some reason, he did not admit into his works. It tells her, that his only title to the great honour he now does himself is the obligation he formerly received from her royal indulgence. Of this obligation nothing is now known. Young is said to have been engaged at a settled stipend as a writer for the Court. Yet who shall say this with certainty? In all modern periods of this country, the writers on one side have been regularly called Hirelings, and on the other Patriots.

Of the dedication, however, the complexion is clearly political. It speaks in the highest terms of the late peace;—it gives her Majesty praise indeed for her victories, but says that the author is more pleased to see her rise from this lower world, soaring above the clouds, passing the first and second heavens, and leaving the fixed stars behind her;—nor will he lose her there, but keep her still in view through the boundless spaces on the other side of Creation, in her journey towards eternal bliss, till he behold the heaven of heavens open, and angels receiving and conveying her still onward from the

the stretch of his imagination, which tires in her pursuit, and falls back again to earth.

The Queen was soon called away from this lower world, to a place where human praise or human flattery are of little consequence. If Young thought the dedication contained only the praise of truth, he should not have omitted it in his works. Was he conscious of the exaggeration of party? Then he should not have written it. The poem itself is not without a glance to politicks, notwithstanding the subject. The cry that the church was in danger, had not yet subsided. The *Last Day*, written by a layman, was much approved by the ministry and their friends.

Before the Queen's death, *The Force of Religion, or Vanquished Love*, was sent into the world. This poem is founded on the execution of lady Jane Gray and her husband lord Guilford in 1554—a story chosen for the subject of a tragedy by Edmund Smith, and wrought into a tragedy by Rowe. The dedication of it to the Countess of Salisbury does not appear in his own edition. He hopes it may be some excuse for his presumption that the story could not have been read without thoughts of the Countess of Salisbury, though it had been dedicated to another. “To behold,” he proceeds, “a person only virtuous,
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“ stirs in us a prudent regret; to behold a
 “ person *only* amiable to the sight, warms us
 “ with a religious indignation; but to turn
 “ our eyes on a Countess of Salisbury, gives
 “ us pleasure and improvement; it works a
 “ sort of miracle, occasions the bias of our
 “ nature to fall off from sin, and makes our
 “ very senses and affections converts to our re-
 “ ligion, and promoters of our duty.” His
 flattery was as ready for the other sex as for
 ours, and was at least as well adapted.

August the 27th, 1714, Pope writes to his
 friend Jervas, that he is just arrived from Ox-
 ford—that every one was much concerned for
 the Queen’s death, but that no panegyricks
 were ready yet for the King. Nothing like
 friendship had yet taken place between Pope
 and Young; for, soon after the event which
 Pope mentions, Young published a poem on
 the late Queen’s death, and his Majesty’s ac-
 cession to the throne. It is inscribed to Ad-
 dison, then secretary to the Lords Justices.
 Whatever was the obligation which he had
 formerly received from Anne, the poet ap-
 pears to aim at something of the same sort
 from George. Of the poem the intention
 seems to have been, to shew that he had the
 same extravagant strain of praise for a King as
 for a Queen. To discover, at the very outset
 of a foreigner’s reign, that the Gods bless his
 new

new subjects in such a King, is something more than praise. Neither was this deemed one of his *excuseable pieces*. We do not find it in his works.

Young's father had been well acquainted with Lady Anne Wharton, the first wife of Thomas Wharton, Esq; afterwards Marquis of Wharton—a Lady celebrated for her poetical talents by Burnet and by Waller. To the Dean of Sarum's visitation sermon, already mentioned, were added some copies of verses "by that excellent poetess Mrs. Anne Wharton," upon its being translated into English, at the instance of Waller, by Atwood. Wharton, after he became ennobled, did not drop the son of his old friend. In him, during the short time he lived, Young found a patron, and in his dissolute descendant a friend and a companion. The Marquis died in April 1715. The beginning of the next year the young Marquis set out upon his travels, from which he returned in about a twelvemonth. The beginning of 1717 carried him to Ireland; where, says the Biographia, "on the score of his extraordinary qualities, he had the honour done him of being admitted, though under age, to take his seat in the House of Lords."

With this unhappy character we might have presumed, almost without evidence, that Young went to Ireland. From his Letter to Richardson on *Original Composition*, it is clear he was, at some period of his life, in that country. "I remember," says he, in that Letter, speaking of Swift, "as I and others
 " were taking with him an evening walk,
 " about a mile out of *Dublin*, he stopt short;
 " we passed on; but, perceiving he did not
 " follow us, I went back, and found him fix-
 " ed as a statue, and earnestly gazing upward
 " at a noble elm, which in its uppermost
 " branches was much withered and decayed.
 " Pointing at it," he said, "I shall be like that
 " tree, I shall die at top."—A note from Wharton, among Swift's Letters, clearly shews that this visit to Ireland was paid when he had an opportunity of going thither with his avowed friend and patron.

From *The Englishman* it appears that a tragedy by Young was in the theatre so early as 1713; yet *Busiris* was not brought upon Drury-Lane Stage till 1719. It was inscribed to the Duke of Newcastle, "because the late
 " instances he had received of his Grace's undeserved and uncommon favour, in an affair
 " of some consequence, foreign to the theatre,
 " had taken from him the privilege of chusing
 " a patron." The Dedication he afterwards suppressed.

suppressed.—This was followed in the year 1721 by *The Revenge*. Left at liberty now to chuse his patron, he dedicated this famous tragedy to the Duke of Wharton. “Your Grace,” says the Dedication, “has been pleased to make yourself accessary to the following scenes, not only by suggesting the most beautiful incident in them, but by making all possible provision for the success of the whole.”

That his Grace should have suggested the incident to which he alludes, whatever that incident be, is not unlikely. The last mental exertion of the unhappy superannuated young man, in his quarters at Lerida in Spain, was some scenes of a tragedy on the story of Mary Queen of Scots.

Dryden dedicated *Marriage à la Mode* to Wharton's infamous relation Rochester; whom he acknowledges not only as the defender of his poetry, but as the promoter of his fortune. Young concludes his address to Wharton thus —“My present fortune is his bounty, and my future his care; which I will venture to say will be always remembered to his honour, since he, I know, intended his generosity as an encouragement to merit, though, through his very pardonable partiality to one who bears him so sincere a duty and respect, I
“ happen

"happen to receive the benefit of it." That he ever had such a patron as Wharton, Young took all the pains in his power to conceal from the world, by excluding this Dedication from his works. He should have remembered, that he at the same time concealed his obligation to Wharton for *the most beautiful incident* in what is surely not his least beautiful composition. The passage just quoted is, in a poem afterwards addressed to Walpole, literally copied:

Be this thy partial smile from censure free;
'Twas meant for merit, though it fell on me.

While Young, who, in his *Love of Fame*, complains grievously how often *dedications wash an Æthiopian white*, was painting an amiable Duke of Wharton in perishable prose, Pope was perhaps beginning to describe the *scorn and wonder of his days* in lasting verse.

To the patronage of such a character, had Young studied men as much as Pope, he would have known how little to have trusted. Young, however, was certainly indebted to it for something material; and his Grace's regard for Young, added to his *Lust of Praise*, procured to All-souls College a donation, which is not forgotten by the Dedication of *The Revenge*.

It

It will surprize you to see me cite second Atkins, Case 136, Stiles *versus* the Attorney General, 14 March 1740, as authority for the Life of a Poet. But biographers do not always find such certain guides as the oaths of those they record. Chancellor Hardwicke was to determine whether two annuities granted by the Duke of Wharton to Young were for legal considerations. The first was dated the 24th of March, 1719, and accounted for his Grace's bounty in a stile princely and commendable, if not legal—"considering that the publick
"good is advanced by the encouragement of
"learning and the polite arts, and being pleased
"therein with the attempts of Dr. Young, in
"consideration thereof, and of the love he
"bare him, &c." The second was dated the 10th of July, 1722. Young, on his examination, swore that he quitted the Exeter family, and refused an annuity of 100*l.* which had been offered him for his life, if he would continue tutor to Lord Burleigh, upon the pressing solicitations of the Duke of Wharton, and his Grace's assurances of providing for him in a much more ample manner. It also appeared that the Duke had given him a bond for 600*l.* dated the 15th of March, 1721, in consideration of his taking several journies, and being at great expences, in order to be chosen member of the House of Commons at the Duke's desire, and in consideration of his not taking

two

two livings of 200*l.* and 400*l.* in the gift of All-soul's College, on his Grace's promises of serving and advancing him in the world.

This attempt to get into Parliament was at Cirencester, where Young stood a contested election. His Grace discovered in him talents for oratory as well as for poetry. Nor was this judgement wrong. Young, after he took orders, became a very popular preacher, and was much followed for the grace and animation of his delivery. By his oratorical talents he was once in his life, according to the *Biographia*, deserted. As he was preaching in his turn at St. James's, he plainly perceived it was out of his power to command the attention of his audience. This so affected the feelings of the preacher, that he sat back in the pulpit, and burst into tears.—But to pursue his poetical life.

In 1719 he lamented the death of Addison, in a Letter addressed to their common friend Tickell. For the secret history of the following lines, if they contain any, it is now vain to seek:

*In joy once join'd, in sorrow, now, for years—
Partner in grief, and brother of my tears,
Tickell, accept this verse, thy mournful due.*

In

In 1719 appeared a *Paraphrase on Part of the Book of Job*. Parker, to whom it is dedicated, had not long, by means of the seals, been qualified for a patron. Of this work the author's opinion may be gathered from his Letter to Curll: "You seem, in the Collection you propose, to have omitted what I think may claim the first place in it; I mean *a Translation from Part of Job*, printed by Mr. Tonson." The Dedication, which was only suffered to appear in Tonson's edition, while it speaks of his present retirement, seems to make an unusual struggle to escape from retirement. It is addressed, in no common strain of flattery, to a Lord Chancellor, of whom he clearly appears to have had no kind of knowledge.

Of his Satires it would not have been difficult to fix the dates without the assistance of first editions, which, as you had occasion to observe in the Life of Dryden, are with difficulty found. We must then have referred to the Poems, to find when they were written. For these internal notes of time we should not have referred in vain. The first Satire laments that

"Guilt's chief foe in Addison is fled;"
and the second, addressing himself, asks,

Is

Is thy ambition sweating for a rhyme,
 Thou unambitious fool, at this late time?
 A fool at *forty* is a fool indeed.

The Satires were originally published separately in folio, and these passages fix the appearance of the first to about 1725, the time at which it came out. As Young seldom suffered his pen to dry, after he had once dipped it in poetry, we may conclude that he began his Satires soon after he had written the *Paraphrase on Job*. The last was certainly finished in the beginning of the year 1726; for in December 1725 the King, in his passage from Helvoetsluys, escaped with great difficulty from a storm by landing at Rye; and the conclusion of the Satire turns the escape into a miracle, in such an encomiastick strain of compliment as poetry too often seeks to pay to royalty. From the sixth of these poems we learn,

Midst empire's charms, how Carolina's heart
 Glow'd with the love of virtue and of art:

Since the grateful poet tells us in the next couplet,

Her favour is diffused to that degree,
 Excess of goodness! it has dawn'd on me.

Of

Of the nature of this favour we must now rest contented in ignorance. The fifth Satire, *on Women*, was not published till 1727; and the sixth not till 1728.

To these Poems, when he gathered them into one publication under the title of *The Universal Passion*, he prefixed a Preface, in which he observes, that "no man can converse much in the world but, at what he meets with, he must either be insensible or grieve, or be angry or smile. Now to smile at it, and turn it into ridicule," adds he, "I think most eligible, as it hurts ourselves least, and gives vice and folly the greatest offence. ---Laughing at the misconduct of the world, will, in a great measure, ease us of any more disagreeable passion about it. One passion is more effectually driven out by another than by reason, whatever some teach." So wrote, and so of course thought the lively and witty Satirist at the grave age of almost fifty, who, many years earlier in life, wrote the *Last Day*. After all, Swift pronounced of these Satires, that they should either have been more angry, or more merry. Is it not somewhat singular that Young preserved, without any palliation, this Preface, so bluntly decisive in favour of laughing at the world, in the same collection of his works which contains

tains the mournful, angry, gloomy *Night Thoughts*?

At the conclusion of the Preface he applies Plato's beautiful fable of the *Birth of Love* to modern poetry, with the addition, "that Poetry, like Love, is a little subject to blindness, which makes her mistake her way to preferments and honours; and that she retains a dutiful admiration of her father's family; but divides her favours, and generally lives with her mother's relations." Poetry, it is true, did not lead Young to preferments or to honours; but was there not something like blindness sometimes in the flattery which he forced her, and her sister Prose, to utter? He always, indeed, made her entertain a most dutiful admiration of riches; but surely Young, though nearly related to Poetry, had no connexion with her whom Plato makes the mother of Love. The frequent bounties his gratitude records, and the fortune he left behind him, clearly show that he could not complain of being related to Poverty. By *The Universal Passion* he acquired no vulgar fortune, more than three thousand pounds. A sum not much less had already been swallowed up in the South Sea. For this loss he took the vengeance of an author. His Muse makes poetical use more than once of a *South-Sea Dream*.

It

It is related by Mr. Spence, in his Manuscript Anecdotes, on the authority of Mr. Rawlinson, that Young, upon the publication of his *Universal Passion*, received from the Duke of Grafton two thousand pounds; and that, when one of his friends exclaimed, *Two thousand pounds for a poem!* he said it was the best bargain he ever made in his life, for the poem was worth four thousand.

This story may be true; but it seems to have been raised from the two answers of Lord Burghley and Sir Philip Sidney in Spenser's Life.

When Young was writing a tragedy, Grafton is said to have sent him a human skull, with a candle in it, as a proper lamp*.

After inscribing his Satires, not in the hope of not finding preferments and honours, to the Duke of Dorset, Mr. Dodington, Mr. Spencer Compton, Lady Elizabeth Germain, and Sir Robert Walpole, he returns to plain panegyric. In 1726 he addressed a poem to Sir Robert Walpole, of which the title, *The Instalment*, sufficiently explains the intention. If Young was a ready celebrator, he did not endeavour, or did not choose, to be a lasting

* Spence.

one. *The Instalment* is among the pieces he did not admit into the number of his *excuseable writings*. Yet it contains a couplet which pretends to pant after the power of bestowing immortality:

Oh how I long, enkindled by the theme,
In deep Eternity to launch thy name!

The bounty of the former reign seems to have been continued, possibly increased, in this. Whatever it was, the poet thought he deserved it;—for he was not ashamed to acknowledge what, without his acknowledgement, would now perhaps never have been known:

My breast, O Walpole, glows with grateful
fire.

The streams of royal bounty, turn'd by thee,
Refresh the dry domains of poesy.

If the purity of modern patriotism term Young a pensioner, it must at least be confessed he was a grateful one.

The reign of the new monarch was ushered in by Young with *Ocean, an Ode*. The hint of it was taken from the royal speech, which recommended the increase and encouragement of the seamen; that they might be *invited*,
rather

rather than compelled by force and violence, to enter into the service of their country;----a plan which humanity must lament that policy has not even yet been able, or willing, to carry into execution. Prefixed to the original publication were an *Ode to the King*, *Pater Patriæ*, and an *Essay on Lyrick Poetry*. It is but justice to confess, that though the booksellers have now, for some reason, revived them both, he preserved neither of them; and that the ode itself, which in the first edition and in the present consists of seventy-three stanzas, in the author's own edition is reduced to forty-nine. Among the omitted passages is a *Wish*, that concluded the poem, which few would have suspected Young of forming, and of which few, after having formed it, would confess their shame by suppression.

It is whimsical that he, who was soon to bid adieu to rhyme, should fix upon a measure in which rhyme abounds even to satiety. Of this he said, in his *Essay on Lyrick Poetry*, prefixed to the Poem, "For the more *harmony* likewise "I chose the frequent return of rhyme, which "laid me under great difficulties. But difficulties, overcome, give grace and pleasure. "Nor can I account for the *pleasure of rhyme* "in general (of which the moderns are too "fond) but from this truth." But the moderns surely deserve not much censure for their fondness

fondness of what, by his own confession, affords pleasure, and abounds in harmony.

About this time he entered into Orders; and in April 1728, soon after he put on the gown, he was appointed chaplain to George the Second.

The tragedy of *The Brothers*, which was already in rehearsal, he immediately withdrew from the stage. The managers resigned it with some reluctance to the delicacy of the new clergyman. The Epilogue to *The Brothers*, the only appendage to any of his three plays which he added himself, is, I believe, the only one of the kind. He calls it an *historical* Epilogue. Finding that *Guilt's dreadful close his narrow scene denied*, he, in a manner, continues the tragedy in the Epilogue, and relates how Rome revenged the shade of Demetrius, and punished Perseus *for this night's deed*.

Of this change of profession something is told by the biographer of Pope, which places the easiness and simplicity of Young in a singular light. When he determined on Orders, he did not address himself to Sherlock, to Atterbury, or to Hare, for the best instructions in Theology, but to Pope; who, in a youthful frolic, advised the diligent perusal of

Thomas

Thomas Aquinas. With this treasure Young retired from interruption to an obscure place in the suburbs. His poetical guide to godliness hearing nothing of him during half a year, and apprehending he might have carried the jest too far, sought after him, and found him just in time to prevent what Ruffhead calls an *irretrievable derangement*.

That attachment to his favourite study which made him think a poet the surest guide in his new profession, left him little doubt whether poetry was the surest path to its honours and preferments. Not long indeed after he took Orders, he published in prose, *A true Estimate of Human Life*, dedicated, notwithstanding the Latin quotations with which it abounds, to the Queen; and a sermon preached before the House of Commons, 1729, on the martyrdom of King Charles, entitled *An Apology for Princes, or the Reverence due to Government*. But his old friends the Muses were not forgotten. In 1730 he sent into the world *Imperium Pelagi; a Naval Lyric, written in Imitation of Pindar's Spirit, occasioned by His Majesty's Return from Hanover, September 1729, and the succeeding Peace*. It is inscribed to the Duke of Chandos. In the Preface we are told, that the Ode is the most spirited kind of Poetry, and that the Pindaric is the most spirited kind of Ode. "This I speak," he adds, "at my

"own very great peril. But truth has an eternal title to our confession, though we are sure "to suffer by it." Let it not be forgotten that this was one of his pieces which the author of the *Night Thoughts* deliberately refused to own.

Not long after this Pindaric attempt, he published two Epistles to Pope, *concerning the Authors of the Age*, 1730. Of these poems one occasion seems to have been an apprehension lest, from the liveliness of his satires, he should not be deemed sufficiently serious for promotion in the Church.

In July 1730 he was presented by his College to the rectory of Welwyn in Hertfordshire. In April 1732 he married Lady Elizabeth Lee, daughter of the Earl of Litchfield, and widow of Colonel Lee. His connexion with this Lady arose from his father's acquaintance, already mentioned, with Lady Ann Wharton, who was coheiress of Sir Henry Lee of Ditchley in Oxfordshire.

We may naturally conclude that he now gave himself up in some measure to the comforts of his new connexion, and to the expectations of that preferment which he thought due to his poetical talents, or, at least, to the manner

ner in which they had so frequently been exerted.

The next production of his Muse was *The Sea-piece*, in two odes.

Young enjoys the credit of what is called an *Extempore Epigram* on Voltaire; who, when he was in England, ridiculed, in the company of the jealous English poet, Milton's allegory of *Sin and Death*—

You are so witty, profligate and thin,
At once we think thee Milton's Death and Sin.

From a passage in the poetical Dedication of his *Sea-piece* to Voltaire, it seems that his extemporaneous reproof (if it must be extemporaneous), for what few will now affirm Voltaire to have deserved any reproof, was something longer than a distich, and something more gentle than this distich.

No stranger, Sir, though born in foreign climes.

On *Dorset* downs, when Milton's page,

With Sin and Death provok'd thy rage,

Thy rage provok'd, who sooth'd with gentle rhymes?

By *Dorset downs* he probably meant Mr. Dodington's seat. In Pitt's Poems is *An Epistle to Dr. Edward Young, at Eastbury in Dorsetshire, on the Review at Sarum, 1722.*

While with your Dodington retir'd you sit,
Charm'd with his flowing Burgundy and
wit, &c.

In 1734 he published *The foreign Address, occasioned by the British Fleet and the Posture of Affairs. Written in the Character of a Sailor.* This Ode consisted of forty-five stanzas. It is not to be found in the author's four volumes, and the editors of the present collection of English poetry have, for once, followed the decision of the author. Of all the pieces which Young condemned as inexcusable, this alone has escaped that posthumous insertion, which, in truth, it little merited. He now appears to have given up all hopes of overtaking Pindar, and perhaps to have thought of turning his ambition to some original species of poetry. This poem concludes with a formal farewell to Ode:

My shell which Clio gave, which *Kings* ap-
plaud,
Which Europe's bleeding genius call'd abroad,
Adieu!

In a species of poetry altogether his own he next tried his skill, and succeeded.

Of his wife he was deprived in 1740. She was soon followed by an amiable daughter, the child of her former husband, who was just married to Mr. Temple, son of Lord Palmerston. Mr. Temple did not long remain after his wife*. How suddenly their deaths happened, and how nearly together, none who has read the *Night Thoughts* (and who has not read them?) needs to be informed.

Infatiate Archer! could not one suffice?

Thy shaft flew thrice; and thrice my peace was slain;

And thrice, ere thrice yon moon had fill'd her horn.

To the sorrow Young felt at his losses we are indebted for these poems. There is a pleasure sure, in sadness which mourners only know. Of these poems the three or four first have been perused perhaps more eagerly, and more frequently, than the latter. When he got as far as the fourth or fifth, his grief was naturally either diminished or exhausted. We find

* The Irish Peerage, if authentic, in the account of Lord Palmerston's family, somewhat confuses this business; but I take what I have related to be the fact.

the same religion, the same piety; but we hear less of Philander and of Narcissa.

Mrs. Temple died *in her bridal hour* at Nice. He, with the rest of her family, accompanied her to the continent.

He flew, he snatch'd her from the rigid North,
And bore her nearer to the sun.

The poet seems to dwell with more melancholy on the deaths of Philander and Narcissa, than of his wife. He who runs and reads may remember, that in the *Night Thoughts* Philander and Narcissa are often mentioned, and often lamented. To recollect lamentations over the author's wife, the memory must have been charged with distinct passages. This Lady brought him one child, Frederick, now living.

That domestick grief is, in the first instance, to be thanked for these ornaments to our language it is impossible to deny. Nor would it be common hardness to contend that worldly discontent had no hand in these joint productions of poetry and piety. Yet am I by no means sure that, at any rate, we should not have had something of the same colour from Young's pencil, notwithstanding the liveliness of
of

of his satires. In so long a life, causes for discontent and occasions for grief must have occurred. It is not clear to me that his Muse was not sitting upon the watch for the first which happened. *Night Thoughts* were not uncommon to her, even when first she visited the poet, and at a time when he himself was remarkable neither for gravity nor gloominess. In his *Last Day*, almost his earliest poem, he calls her the *melancholy Maid*,

—whom dismal scenes delight,
Frequent at tombs and in the realms of
Night.

And in the prayer which concludes the second book of the same poem—

—Oh! permit the gloom of solemn night
To sacred thought may forcibly invite.
Oh! how divine to tread the milky way,
To the bright palace of Eternal Day!

Still, is it altogether fair to dress up the poet for the man, and to bring the gloominess of the *Night Thoughts* to prove the gloominess of Young, and to shew that his genius, like the genius of Swift, was in some measure the sul-
len inspiration of discontent?

Whether

Whether you think with me, I know not; but the famous *De mortuis nil nisi bonum* has always stricken me as favouring more of female weakness than of manly reason. Censure is not heard beneath the tomb any more than praise. *De mortuis nil nisi verum—De vivis nil nisi bonum*—would approach much nearer to good sense. After all, the few handfuls of remaining dust which once composed the body of the author of the *Night Thoughts*, feel not much concern whether Young passes now for a man of sorrow, or for a *fellow of infinite jest*. To this favour must come the whole family of Yorick.—His immortal part, wherever that now dwells, is still less solicitous on this head. But to a son of worth and sensibility it is of some little consequence whether contemporaries believe, and posterity be taught to believe, that his debauched and reprobate life cast a Stygian gloom over the evening of his father's days, saved him the trouble of feigning a character completely detestable, and succeeded at last in bringing his *grey hairs with sorrow to the grave*.

The humanity of the world, little satisfied with inventing perhaps a melancholy disposition for the father, proceeds next to invent an argument in support of their invention, and chooses that Lorenzo should be Young's own son. The *Biographia* pretty roundly asserts this

this to be the fact; of the absolute impossibility of which the *Biographia* itself, in particular dates, contains undeniable evidence. Readers I know there are of a strange turn of mind, who will hereafter peruse the *Night Thoughts* with less satisfaction; who will wish they had still been deceived; who will quarrel with me for discovering that no such character as Lorenzo ever yet disgraced human nature, or broke a father's heart. Yet would these admirers of the sublime and terrible be offended, should you set them down for cruel and for savage.

Of this report, inhuman to the surviving son, if it be untrue, in proportion as the character of Lorenzo is diabolical, where are we to find the proofs? Perhaps it is clear from the performance itself. From the first line to the last of the *Night Thoughts* no one expression can be discovered which betrays any thing like the father. In the second *Night* I find an expression which betrays something else; that Lorenzo was his friend; one, it is possible, of his former companions; one of the Duke of Wharton's set. The Poet styles him *gay Friend*—an appellation not very natural from a pious incensed father to such a being as he paints Lorenzo, and that being his son.

But

But let us see how he has sketched this dreadful portrait, from the sight of some of whose features the artist himself must have turned away with horror!—A subject more shocking, if his only child really sat to him, than the crucifixion of Michael Angelo; upon the horrid story told of which, Young composed a short Poem of fourteen lines in the early part of life, which he did not think deserved to be republished.

In the first *Night*, the address to the Poet's supposed son is,

Lorenzo, Fortune makes her court to thee.

In the fifth *Night*—

And burns Lorenzo still for the sublime
Of life? To hang his airy nest on high?

Is this a picture of the son of the rector of
Wellwyn?

Eighth *Night*—

In foreign realms (for thou hast travell'd
far)—

which even now does not apply to his son.

In

In *Night* five—

So wept Lorenzo fair Clarissa's fate,
Who gave that angel-boy on whom he dotes,
And died to give him, orphan'd in his birth!

At the beginning of the fifth *Night* we find—

Lorenzo! to recriminate is just.
I grant the man is vain who writes for praise.

But, to cut short all enquiry, if any one of these passages, if any passage in the poems, be applicable, my friend shall pass for Lorenzo. The son of the author of the *Night Thoughts* was not old enough, when the *Night Thoughts* were written, to recriminate, or to be a father. The *Night Thoughts* were begun immediately after the mournful events of 1740. The first *Nights* appear in the Stationers' books as the property of Robert Dodsley, in 1742. The Preface to *Night* Seven is dated July the 7th, 1744. The marriage, in consequence of which the supposed Lorenzo was born, happened in April 1732. Young's child was not born till June 1733. In 1740 this Lorenzo, this finished infidel, this *father*, to whose education Vice had for some years put the last hand, was only *seven* years old. An anecdote of this cruel sort, so open to contradiction, so impossible

impossible to be true, who could propagate? Thus easily are blasted the reputations of the living and of the dead.

Who then was Lorenzo? exclaim the readers I have mentioned. If he was not his son, was he not his nephew, his cousin?

These are questions which I do not pretend to answer. For the sake of human nature, I could wish Lorenzo to have been only the creation of the Poet's fancy. That this was the case, many expressions in the *Night Thoughts* would seem to prove, did not a passage in *Night Eight* appear to shew that he had somebody in his eye for the ground-work at least of the painting. Lovelace or Lorenzo may be feigned characters; but a writer does not feign a name of which he only gives the initial letter:

Tell not Calista. She will laugh thee dead,
Or send thee to her hermitage with L—.

The Biographia, not satisfied with pointing out the son of Young, in that son's life-time, as his father's Lorenzo, travels out of its way into the history of the son, and tells of his having been forbidden his college at Oxford for misbehaviour, and of his long labouring under the displeasure of his father. How such anecdotes,

anecdotes, were they true, tend to illustrate the Life of Young, it is not easy to discover. If the son of the author of the *Night Thoughts* was indeed forbidden his college for a time at one of our universities, the author of *Paradise Lost* was disgracefully ejected from the other, with the additional indignity of publick corporal correction. From juvenile follies who is free? Were Nature to indulge the son of Young with a second youth, and to leave him at the same time the experience of that which is past, he would probably pass it differently (who would not?); he would certainly be the occasion of less uneasiness to his father;—but, from the same experience, he would as certainly be treated in a different manner by his father. Young was a poet; poets (with reverence be it spoken) do not make the best parents. Fancy and imagination seldom deign to stoop from their heights; always stoop unwillingly to the low level of common duties. Aloof from vulgar life, they pursue their rapid flight beyond the ken of mortals, and descend not to earth but when obliged by necessity. The prose of ordinary occurrences is beneath the dignity of poetry.

Yet the son of Young would almost sooner, I know, pass for a Lorenzo, than see himself vindicated, at the expence of his father's memory, from follies which, if it was blameable
in

in a boy to have committed them, it is surely praise-worthy in a man to lament, and certainly not only unnecessary but cruel in a biographer to record.

Of Edward Young an anecdote which wanders among readers is not true, that he was Fielding's *Parson Adams*. The original of that famous painting was William Young. He too was a clergyman. He supported an uncomfortable existence by translating for the book-sellers from Greek; and, if he was not his own friend, was at least no man's enemy. Yet the facility with which this report has gained belief in the world, argues (were it not sufficiently known) that the author of the *Night Thoughts* bore some resemblance to *Adams*.

Of the *Night Thoughts*, notwithstanding their author's professed retirement, all are inscribed to great or to growing names. He had not yet weaned himself from Earls and Dukes, from Speakers of the House of Commons, Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, and Chancellors of the Exchequer. In *Night Eight* the politician plainly betrays himself—

Think no post needful that demands a knave.
When late our civil helm was shifting hands,
So P— thought: think better if you can.

Yet

Yet it must be confessed, that at the conclusion of *Night Nine*, weary perhaps of courting earthly patrons, he tells his soul,

Henceforth

Thy *patron* he, whose diadem has dropt
Yon gems of heaven ; Eternity thy prize ;
And leave the racers of the world their own.

The *Fourth Night* was addressed by “a much-indebted Muse” to the Honourable Mr. Yorke, now Lord Hardwicke ; who meant to have laid the Muse under still greater obligations, by the living of Shenfield in Essex, if it had become vacant.

The *First Night* concludes with this passage—

Dark, though not blind, like thee, Meonides ;
Or Milton, thee. Ah ! could I reach your
frain ;

Or his who made Meonides our own !

Man too he sung. Immortal man I sing.

Oh had he prest his theme, pursued the track

Which opens out of darkness into day !

Oh had he mounted on his wing of fire,

Soar'd, where I sink, and sung immortal
man—

How had it blest mankind, and rescued me !

To

To the author of these lines Dr. Warton chose, in 1756, to dedicate his *Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope*, which attempted (whether justly or not) to pluck from Pope his *Wing of Fire*, and to reduce him to a rank at least one degree lower than the class of English poets. Though the first edition of this Essay was, for particular reasons, suppressed; another was printed. The Dedication still remained. To suppose therefore that Young approved of Warton's opinion of Pope is not unnatural. Yet the author of the passage just quoted would scarcely countenance, by patronage, such an attack upon the fame of him whom he invokes as his Muse. Part of Pope's Third Book of the *Odyssey*, deposited in the Museum, is written upon the back of a Letter signed *E. Young*, which is clearly the hand-writing of our Young. The Letter, dated only May the 2d, seems obscure; but there can be little doubt that the friendship he requests was a literary one*, and that he had the highest literary opinion of Pope.

" Dear Sir,

May the 2d.

" Having been often from home, I know
 " not if you have done me the favour of
 " calling on me. But, be that as it will, I

* I am told that it was a Prologue for one of his Tragedies.

" much

" much want that instance of your friendship
 " I mentioned in my last ; a friendship I am
 " very sensible I can receive from no one but
 " yourself. I should not urge this thing so
 " much but for very particular reasons ; nor
 " can you be at a loss to conceive how a *trif-
 " fle of this nature* may be of serious moment
 " to me ; and while I am in hopes of the
 " great advantage of your advice about it, I
 " shall not be so absurd as to make any fur-
 " ther step without it. I know you are much
 " engaged, and only hope to hear of you at
 " your entire leisure.

" I am, Sir,

" Your most faithful

" and obedient Servant,

" E. YOUNG."

Nay, even after Pope's death, he says, in *Night Seven* :

Pope, who could'st make immortals, art thou
dead ?

Either Warton, then, dedicated his book to a patron who disapproved its doctrine ; or Young, in his old age, bartered for a dedication an opinion entertained of his friend through all that part of life when he could best form opinions.

From this account of Young, two or three short passages, which stand almost together in *Night Four*, should not be excluded. They afford a picture, by his own hand; from the study of which my readers may choose to form their own opinion of the features of his mind, and the complexion of his life.

Ah me! the dire effect
Of loitering here, of death defrauded long;
Of old so gracious (and let that suffice),
My very master knows me not.

*

I've been so long remember'd, I'm forgot.

*

When in his courtier's ears I pour my plaint,
They drink it as the Nectar of the Great;
And squeeze my hand, and beg me come to-morrow.

*

Twice-told the period spent on stubborn Troy,
Court-favour, yet untaken, I besiege.

*

If this song lives, Posterity shall know,
One, though in Britain born, with courtiers
bred,

Who

Who thought ev'n gold might come a day
too late;

Nor on his subtle death-bed plann'd his
scheme

For future vacancies in church or state,

By these extraordinary Poems, written after he was sixty, of which I have been led to say so much, I hope, by the wish of doing justice to the living and the dead, it was the desire of Young to be principally known. He entitled the four volumes which he published himself, *The Works of the Author of the Night Thoughts*. While it is remembered that from these he excluded many of his writings, let it not be forgotten that the rejected pieces contained nothing prejudicial to the cause of virtue, or of religion. Were every thing that Young ever wrote to be published, he would only appear perhaps in a less respectable light as a poet, and more despicable as a dedicator: he would not pass for a worse christian, or for a worse man.—His dedications, after all, he had no right to suppress. They all, I believe, speak, not a little to the credit of his gratitude, of favours received; and I know not whether the author, who has once solemnly printed an acknowledgment of a favour, should not always print it.

Is it to the credit or to the discredit of Young, as a poet, that of his *Night Thoughts* the French are particularly fond?

Of the *Epitaph on Lord Aubrey Beauclerk*, dated 1740, all I know is, that I find it in this Body of English Poetry, and that I am sorry to find it there.

Notwithstanding the farewell which he seemed to have taken in the *Night Thoughts* of every thing which bore the least resemblance to ambition, he dipped again in politics. In 1745 he wrote *Reflections on the public Situation of the Kingdom, addressed to the Duke of Newcastle*—impatient, as it appears, to behold

A pope-bred Princeling crawl ashore,
And whistle cut-throats, with those swords that
scrap'd
Their barren rocks for wretched sustenance,
To cut his passage to the British throne.

This political poem might be called a *Night Thought*. Indeed it was originally printed as the conclusion of the *Night Thoughts*, though he did not gather it with his other works.

Prefixed

Prefixed to the second edition of Howe's *Devout Meditations* is a Letter from Young, dated January 19, 1752, addressed to Archibald Macaulay, Esq; thanking him for the book, which he says " he shall never lay far " out of his reach; for a greater demonstration " of a sound head and a sincere heart he never saw."

In 1753, when *The Brothers* had lain by him above thirty years, it appeared upon the stage. If any part of his fortune had been acquired by servility of adulation, he now determined to deduct from it no inconsiderable sum, as a gift to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. To this sum he hoped the profits of *The Brothers* would amount. In his calculation he was deceived; but the Society were not losers by the bad success of the play. The author made up the sum he intended, which was a thousand pounds, from his own pocket.

The next performance which he printed was a prose publication, entitled, *The Centaur not fabulous, in six Letters to a Friend on the Life in Vogue*. The Conclusion is dated November 29, 1754. In the third Letter is described the death-bed of the gay, young, noble, ingenious, accomplished, and most wretched Altamont. His last words were—" My principles have
"poisoned

“poisoned my friend, my extravagance has
 “beggared my boy, my unkindness has mur-
 “dered my wife!” Either Altamont and Lo-
 renzo were the same, or Young was unlucky
 enough to know two characters who bore no
 little resemblance to each other in perfection
 of wickedness.

The Old Man's Relapse, occasioned by an
 Epistle to Walpole, if it was written by Young,
 which I much doubt, must have been written
 very late in life. It has been seen, I am told,
 in a Miscellany published thirty years before
 his death.—In 1758 he exhibited *The Old Man's*
Relapse in more than words, by again becom-
 ing a dedicator, and publishing a sermon ad-
 dressed to the King.

The Letter in prose on *Original Composition*,
 addressed to Richardson the author of *Clarissa*,
 appeared in 1759. He, who employed his
 pious pen for almost the last time in doing jus-
 tice to the exemplary death-bed of Addison,
 might probably, at the close of his own life,
 afford no unuseful lessons for the deaths of
 others.

The few lines which stand in this edition
 as sent by Lord Melcombe to Dr. Young, not
 long before his *Lordship's Death*, were indeed
 so sent, but were only an introduction to
 what

what was there meant by *the Muses latest spark*. The poem is necessary, whatever may be its merit, since the Preface to it is already printed. Lord Melcombe called his *Tusculum La Trappe*.

“ Love thy country, wish it well,
Not with too intense a care,
'Tis enough, that, when it fell,
Thou its ruin didst not share.

Envy's censure, Flattery's praise,
With unmov'd indifference view;
Learn to tread Life's dangerous maze,
With unerring Virtue's clue.

Void of strong desire and fear,
Life's wide ocean trust no more;
Strive thy little bark to steer
With the tide, but near the shore.

Thus prepar'd, thy shorten'd sail
Shall, whene'er the winds increase,
Seizing each propitious gale,
Waft thee to the Port of Peace.

Keep thy conscience from offence,
And tempestuous passions free,
So, when thou art call'd from hence,
Easy shall thy passage be;

Easy

Easy shall thy passage be,
 Chearful thy allotted stay,
 Short the account 'twixt God and thee;
 Hope shall meet thee on the way;

Truth shall lead thee to the gate,
 Mercy's self shall let thee in,
 Where its never-changing state
 Full perfection shall begin."

The Poem was accompanied by a Letter.

" *La Trappe*, the 27th Oct. 1761.

" Dear Sir,

" You seemed to like the ode I sent you for
 " your amusement; I now send it you as a
 " present. If you please to accept of it, and
 " are willing that our friendship should be
 " known, when we are gone, you will be
 " pleased to leave this among those of your
 " own papers, that may possibly see the light,
 " by a posthumous publication. God send
 " us health while we stay, and an easy jour-
 " ney. My dear Dr. Young,

" Yours, most cordially,

" MELCOMBE."

In 1762, a short time before his death,
 Young published *Resignation*. Notwithstand-
 ing the manner in which it was forced from
 him by the world, criticism has treated it
 with

with no common severity. If it shall be thought not to deserve the highest praise, on the other side of fourscore by whom, except by Newton and by Waller, has praise been merited? To *Resignation* was prefixed an Apology for its appearance: to which more credit is due than to the generality of such apologies, from Young's unusual anxiety that no more productions of his old age should disgrace his former fame. In his will, dated February 1760, he desires of his executors, *in a particular manner*, that all his manuscript books and writings whatever might be burned, except his book of accounts.

In September 1764 he added a kind of codicil, wherein he made it his dying intreaty to his housekeeper, to whom he left 1000*l*. "that
" all his manuscripts might be destroyed as soon
" as he was dead, which would greatly oblige
" her deceased *friend*."

It may teach mankind the uncertainty of worldly friendships, to know that Young, either by surviving those he loved, or by outliving their affections, could only recollect the names of two friends, this poor woman and a hatter, to mention in his will; and it may serve to repress that testamentary pride, which too often seeks for founding names and titles, to be informed that the author of the *Night Thoughts* did not blush to leave a legacy to his
" friend

“ friend Henry Stevens, a hatter at the Temple-gate.” Of these two remaining friends, one went before Young. But, at eighty-four, “ where,” as he says in *The Centaur*, “ is that “ world into which we were born?”

The same humility which marked a housekeeper and a hatter for the friends of the author of the *Night Thoughts*, had before bestowed the same title on his footman, in an epitaph in his *Church-yard* upon James Barker, dated 1749, which I am glad to find in the new collection of his works.

Young and his housekeeper were ridiculed, with more ill-nature than wit, in a kind of novel published by Kidgell in 1755, called *The Card*, under the names of Dr. Elwes and Mrs. Fusby. Kidgell had been Young's curate.

In April 1765, at an age to which few attain, a period was put to the life of Young. Much is told in the *Biographia*, which I know not to have been true, of the manner of his burial—of the master and children of a charity-school, which he founded in his parish, who neglected to attend their benefactor's corpse; and of a bell which was not caused to toll as often as bells usually toll. Had that humanity, which is here lavished upon things of little consequence either to the living or to the dead, been

been shewn in its proper place to the living, I should have had less to say about Lorenzo. They who lament that these misfortunes happened to Young, forget the praise he bestows upon Socrates, in the Preface to *Night Seven*, for representing his friend's request about his funeral.

After his death, Doddsley published a novel called *Eliza*, of which I have been told that Young was the author.

The curious reader of Young's Life will naturally inquire to what it was owing, that, though he lived almost forty years after he took Orders, which included one whole reign uncommonly long, and part of another, he was never thought worthy of the least preferment. The author of the *Night Thoughts* ended his days upon a Living which came to him from his College without any favour, and to which he probably had an eye when he determined on the Church. To satisfy curiosity of this kind is, at this distance of time, far from easy. The parties themselves know not often, at the instant, why they are neglected. The neglect of Young is by some ascribed to his having attached himself to the Prince of Wales, and to his having preached an offensive sermon at St. James's. It has been told me, that he had two hundred a year in the late reign, by the patronage of Walpole; and that, whenever the

the King was reminded of Young, the only answer was, *he has a pension*. All the light thrown on this inquiry, by the following Letter from Secker, only serves to shew us at what a late period of life the author of the *Night Thoughts* solicited preferment.

“ Deanry of St. Paul’s, July 8, 1758.

“ Good Dr. Young,

“ I have long wondered, that more suitable
“ notice of your great merit hath not been
“ taken by persons in power. But how to re-
“ medy the omission, I see not. No encourage-
“ ment hath ever been given me to mention
“ things of this nature to his Majesty. And
“ therefore, in all likelihood, the only conse-
“ quence of doing it would be weakening the
“ little influence, which else I may possibly
“ have on some other occasions. Your for-
“ tune and your reputation set you above the
“ need of advancement; and your sentiments,
“ above that concern for it, on your own ac-
“ count, which, on that of the Public, is sin-
“ cerely felt by

“ Your loving Brother,

“ THOS. CANT.”

At last, at the age of fourscore, he was appointed, in 1761, Clerk of the Closet to the Princess Dowager.

One

One obstacle must have stood not a little in the way of that preferment after which his whole life panted. Though he took Orders, he never intirely shook off Politics. He was always the Lion of his master Milton, *pawing to get free his hinder parts*. By this conduct, if he gained some friends, he made many enemies.

Besides, in the latter part of life, Young was fond of holding himself out for a man retired from the world. The same line which contains *oblitus meorum*, contains also *obliviscendus & illis*. The brittle chain of worldly friendship and patronage is broken as effectually, when one goes beyond the length of it, as when the other does. To the vessel which is sailing from the shore it only appears that the shore also recedes; in life it is truly thus. He who retires from the world, will find himself, in reality, deserted as fast, if not faster, by the world. The public is not to be treated as the vain coxcomb treats his mistress--to be threatened with desertion, in order to increase fondness.

Young seems to have been taken at his word. Notwithstanding his frequent complaints of being neglected, no hand was reached out to pull him from that retirement of which he declared himself enamoured. Alexander assigned no palace for the residence of Diogenes, who boasted his surly satisfaction with his tub.

Of

Of the domestic manners and petty habits of the author of the *Night Thoughts*, I hoped to have given you an account from the best authority;—but who shall dare to say, To-morrow I will be wise or virtuous, or to-morrow I will do a particular thing? Upon enquiring for his housekeeper, I learned that she was buried two days before I reached the town of her abode.

In a Letter from Tſcharner, a noble foreigner, to Count Haller, Tſcharner ſays, he has lately ſpent four days with Young at Wellwyn, where the author taſtes all the eaſe and pleaſure mankind can deſire. “Every thing about him ſhews the man, each individual being placed by rule. All is neat without art. He is very pleaſant in converſation, and extremely polite.”

This, and more, may poſſibly be true; but Tſcharner’s was a firſt viſit, a viſit of curioſity and admiration, and a viſit which the author expected.

The attention Young beſtowed upon the peruſal of books is not unworthy imitation. When any paſſage pleaſed him, he appears to have folded down the leaf. On theſe paſſages he beſtowed a ſecond reading. But the labours of man are too frequently vain. Before he returned, a ſecond time, to what he had once approved,

proved, he died. Many of his books, which I have seen, are by those notes of approbation so swelled beyond their real bulk, that they will not shut.

What though we wade in wealth, or soar in fame!

Earth's highest station ends in here *Here he lies!*

And *dust to dust* concludes her noblest song!

The author of these lines is not without his *hic jacet*.

By the good sense of his son, it contains none of that praise which no marble can make the bad or the foolish merit; which, without the direction of a stone or a turf, will find its way, sooner or later, to the deserving.

M. S.

Optimi parentis

EDWARDI YOUNG, LL. D.

Hujus ecclesiæ rect.

Et Elizabethæ

fæm. prænob.

Conjugis ejus amantissimæ

Pio & gratissimo animo

Hoc marmor posuit

F. Y.

Filius superstes.

Such,

Such, my good friend, is the account I have been able to collect of Young. That it may be long before any thing like what I have just transcribed be necessary for you, is the sincere wish of,

Dear Sir,

Your greatly obliged Friend,

HERBERT CROFT, Jun."

Lincoln's Inn,
Sept. 1780.

OF Young's Poems it is difficult to give any general character; for he has no uniformity of manner: one of his pieces has no great resemblance to another. He began to write early, and continued long; and at different times had different modes of poetical excellence in view. His numbers are sometimes smooth, and sometimes rugged; his stile is sometimes concatenated, and sometimes abrupt; sometimes diffusive, and sometimes concise. His plan seems to have started in his mind at the present moment, and his thoughts appear the effects of chance, sometimes adverse, and sometimes lucky, with very little operation of judgement.

He was not one of the writers whom experience improves, and who observing their own faults become gradually correct. His Poem on the *Last Day*, his first great performance, has an equability and propriety, which he afterwards either never endeavoured or never attained. Many paragraphs are noble, and few are mean, yet the whole is languid; the plan is too much extended, and a succession of images divides and weakens the general conception; but the great reason why the reader is disappointed is, that the thought of the *LAST DAY* makes every man more than poetical, by spreading over his mind a general ob-

scurity of sacred horror, that oppresses distinction, and disdains expression.

His story of *Jane Grey* was never popular. It is written with elegance enough, but *Jane* is too heroick to be pitied.

The *Universal Passion* is indeed a very great performance. It is said to be a series of Epigrams; but if it be, it is what the author intended: his endeavour was at the production of striking distichs and pointed sentences; and his distichs have the weight of solid sentiment, and his points the sharpness of resistless truth. His characters are often selected with discernment, and drawn with nicety; his illustrations are often happy, and his reflections often just. His species of satire is between those of Horace and of Juvenal; he has the gaiety of Horace without his laxity of numbers, and the morality of Juvenal with greater variation of images. He plays, indeed, only on the surface of life; he never penetrates the recesses of the mind, and therefore the whole power of his poetry is exhausted by a single perusal; his conceits please only when they surprise.

To translate he never condescended, unless his *Paraphrase on Job* may be considered as a version; in which he has not, I think,

think, been unsuccessful: he indeed favoured himself, by chusing those parts which most easily admit the ornaments of English poetry.

He had least success in his lyrick attempts, in which he seems to have been under some malignant influence: he is always labouring to be great, and at last is only turgid.

In his *Night Thoughts* he has exhibited a very wide display of original poetry, variegated with deep reflections and striking allusions, a wilderness of thought, in which the fertility of fancy scatters flowers of every hue and of every odour. This is one of the few poems in which blank verse could not be changed for rhyme but with disadvantage. The wild diffusion of the sentiments, and the digressive sallies of imagination, would have been compressed and restrained by regard to rhyme. The excellence of this work is not exactness, but copiousness; particular lines are not to be regarded; the power is in the whole, and in the whole there is a magnificence like that ascribed to Chinese Plantation, the magnificence of vast extent and endless diversity.

His last poem was the *Resignation*; in which he made, as he was accustomed, an experiment of a new mode of writing, and succeeded better than in his *Ocean* or his *Merchant*. It was very falsely represented as a proof of decaying faculties. There is Young in every stanza, such as he often was in his highest vigour.

His Tragedies not making part of the new Collection, I had forgotten, till Mr. Steevens recalled them to my thoughts by remarking, that he seemed to have one favourite catastrophe, as his three Plays all concluded with lavish suicide; a method by which, as Dryden remarked, a poet easily rids his scene of persons whom he wants not to keep alive. In *Busiris* there are the greatest ebullitions of imagination; but the pride of *Busiris* is such as no other man can have, and the whole is too remote from known life to raise either grief, terror, or indignation. The *Revenge* approaches much nearer to human practices and manners, and therefore keeps possession of the stage: the first design seems suggested by *Othello*; but the reflections, the incidents, and the diction, are original. The moral observations are so introduced, and so expressed, as to have all the novelty that can be required. Of *The Brothers* I may be allowed to say nothing,

thing, since nothing was ever said of it by the Publick.

It must be allowed of Young's poetry, that it abounds in thought, but without much accuracy or selection. When he lays hold of an illustration, he pursues it beyond expectation, sometimes happily, as in his parallel of *Quicksilver* with *Pleasure*, which I have heard repeated with approbation by a Lady, of whose praise he would have been justly proud, and which is very ingenious, very subtle, and almost exact; but sometimes he is less lucky, as when, in his *Night Thoughts*, having it dropped into his mind, that the orbs, floating in space, might be called the *cluster* of Creation, he thinks on a cluster of grapes, and says, that they all hang on the great Vine, drinking the *nectareous juice of immortal Life*.

His conceits are sometimes yet less valuable; in the *Last Day*, he hopes to illustrate the re-assembly of the atoms that compose the human body at the *Trump of Doom*, by the collection of bees into a swarm at the tinkling of a pan.

The

The Prophet says of Tyre, that *her Merchants are Princes*; Young says of Tyre in his *Merchant*,

Her merchants Princes, and each *deck a Throne*.

Let burlesque try to go beyond him.

He has the trick of joining the turgid and familiar: to buy the alliance of Britain, *Climes were paid down*. Antithesis is his favourite. *They for kindness hate*; and *because she's right, she's ever in the wrong*.

His versification is his own; neither his blank nor his rhyming lines have any resemblance to those of former writers: he picks up no hemistichs, he copies no favourite expressions; he seems to have laid up no stores of thought or diction, but to owe all to the fortuitous suggestions of the present moment. Yet I have reason to believe that, when once he had formed a new design, he then laboured it with very patient industry, and that he composed with great labour, and frequent revisions.

His verses are formed by no certain model; for he is no more like himself in his different productions than he is like others. He seems
never

never to have studied prosody, nor to have had any direction but from his own ear. But, with all his defects, he was a man of genius and a poet.

and a poet. With all his defects, he was a man of genius, had any direction but from his own ear, but never to have finished properly, nor to have

D Y E R.

JOHN DYER, of whom I have no other account to give than his own Letters, published with Hughes's correspondence, and the notes added by the editor, have afforded me, was born in 1700, the second son of Robert Dyer of Aberglasney in Caermarthenshire, a solicitor of great capacity and note.

He passed through Westminster-school under the care of Dr. Freind, and was then called home to be instructed in his father's profession. But his father died soon, and he took no delight in the study of the law, but, having always amused himself with drawing, resolved to turn painter, and became pupil to Mr. Richardson, an artist then of high reputation, but now better known by his books than by his pictures.

Having studied awhile under his master, he became, as he tells his friend, an itinerant painter,

painter, and wandered about South Wales and the parts adjacent; but he mingled poetry with painting; and about 1727 printed *Grongar Hill* in Lewis's Miscellany.

Being, probably, unsatisfied with his own proficiency, he, like other painters, travelled to Italy; and coming back in 1740, published the *Ruins of Rome*.

If his poem was written soon after his return, he did not make much use of his acquisitions, whatever they might be; for decline of health, and love of study, determined him to the church. He therefore entered into orders; and, it seems, married about the same time a lady of the name of *Enfor*; "whose grandmother," says he, "was a Shakespeare, descended from a brother of every body's Shakespeare;" by her, in 1756, he had a son and three daughters living.

His ecclesiastical provision was a long time but slender. His first patron, Mr. Harper, gave him, in 1741, Calthorp in Leicestershire of eighty pounds a year, on which he lived ten years, and then exchanged it for Belchford in Lincolnshire of seventy-five. His condition now began to mend. In 1752, Sir John Heathcote gave him Coningsby, of one hundred and twenty pounds a year; and afterwards the
Chancellor

Chancellor added Kirkby, of one hundred and ten. He complains that the repair of the house at Coningsby, and other expences, took away the profit.

About the time of his removal to Coningsby he published the *Fleece*, his greatest poetical work; of which I will not suppress a ludicrous story. Doddsley the bookseller was one day mentioning it to a critical visitor, with more expectation of success than the other could easily admit. In the conversation the author's age was asked; and being represented as advanced in life, *He will*, said the critick, *be buried in woollen.*

*Pulled in
1758*

He did not indeed long survive that publication, nor long enjoy the increase of his preferments; for in 1758 he died.

Dyer is not a poet of bulk or dignity sufficient to require an elaborate criticism. *Gongar Hill* is the happiest of his productions: it is not indeed very accurately written; but the scenes which it displays are so pleasing, the images which they raise so welcome to the mind, and the reflections of the writer so consonant to the general sense or experience of mankind, that when it is once read, it will be read again.

The

The idea of the *Ruins of Rome* strikes more but pleases less, and the title raises greater expectation than the performance gratifies. Some passages, however, are conceived with the mind of a poet; as when, in the neighbourhood of dilapidating Edifices, he says,

—At dead of night
The hermit oft, 'midst his orisons, hears,
Aghast, the voice of Time disparting towers.

Of *The Fleece*, which never became popular, and is now universally neglected, I can say little that is likely to recall it to attention. The woolcomber and the poet appear to me such discordant natures, that an attempt to bring them together is to *couple the serpent with the fowl*. When Dyer, whose mind was not unpoetical, has done his utmost, by interesting his reader in our native commodity, by interspersing rural imagery and accidental digressions, by cloathing small images in great words, and by all the writer's arts of delusion, the meanness naturally adhering, and the irreverence habitually annexed to trade and manufacture, sink him under insuperable oppression; and the disgust which blank verse, encumbering and encumbered, superadds to an unpleasing subject, soon repels the reader, however willing to be pleased.

Let

Let me however honestly report whatever may counterbalance this weight of censure. I have been told that Akenfide, who, upon a poetical question, has a right to be heard, said, "That he would regulate his opinion of the reigning taste by the fate of Dyer's *Fleece* ; for, if that were ill received, he should not think it any longer reasonable to expect fame from excellence."

D. V. R. R.

It is the duty of every citizen to
pay his taxes and to support the
government. It is the duty of every
citizen to obey the laws of the
land. It is the duty of every
citizen to be true to his country.

It is the duty of every citizen to
be true to his country. It is the
duty of every citizen to be true to
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M A L L E T.

OF DAVID MALLET, having no written memorial, I am able to give no other account than such as is supplied by the unauthorised loquacity of common fame, and a very slight personal knowledge.

He was by his original one of the Macgregors, a clan that became, about sixty years ago, under the conduct of Robin Roy, so formidable and so infamous for violence and robbery, that the name was annulled by a legal abolition; and when they were all to denominate themselves anew, the father, I suppose, of this author called himself Malloch.

David Malloch was, by the penury of his parents, compelled to be *Janitor* of the High School at Edinburgh; a mean office, of which he did not afterwards delight to hear. But he surmounted the disadvantages of his birth and fortune; for when the Duke of Montrose applied

plied to the College of Edinburgh for a tutor to educate his sons, Malloch was recommended; and I never heard that he dishonoured his credentials.

When his pupils were sent to see the world, they were intrusted to his care; and having conducted them round the common circle of modish travels, he returned with them to London, where, by the influence of the family in which he resided, he naturally gained admission to many persons of the highest rank, and the highest character, to wits, nobles, and statesmen.

Of his works, I know not whether I can trace the series. His first production was *William and Margaret**; of which, though it contains nothing very striking or difficult, he has been envied the reputation; and plagiarism has been boldly charged, but never proved.

Not long afterwards he published the *Excursion* (1728); a desultory and capricious view of such scenes of Nature as his fancy led him, or his knowledge enabled him, to describe. It is not devoid of poetical spirit. Many of

* Mallet's *William and Margaret* was printed in Aaron Hill's *Plain Dealer*, N^o 36, July 24, 1724. In its original state it was very different from what it is in the Collection.

the images are striking, and many of the paragraphs are elegant. The cast of diction seems to be copied from Thomson, whose *Seasons* were then in their full blossom of reputation. He has Thomson's beauties and his faults.

His poem on *Verbal Criticism* (1733) was written to pay court to Pope, on a subject which he either did not understand or willingly misrepresented; and is little more than an improvement, or rather expansion, of a fragment which Pope printed in a Miscellany long before he engrafted it into a regular poem. There is in this piece more pertness than wit, and more confidence than knowledge. The versification is tolerable, nor can criticism allow it a higher praise.

His first tragedy was *Eurydice*, acted at Drury-Lane in 1731; of which I know not the reception nor the merit, but have heard it mentioned as a mean performance. He was not then too high to accept a Prologue and Epilogue from Aaron Hill, neither of which can be much commended.

Having cleared his tongue from his native pronunciation so as to be no longer distinguished as a Scot, he seems inclined to disencumber himself from all adherences of his original, and took upon him to change his name from

Scotch *Malloch* to English *Mallet*, without any imaginable reason of preference which the eye or ear can discover. What other proofs he gave of disrespect to his native country I know not; but it was remarked of him, that he was the only Scot whom Scotchmen did not commend.

About this time Pope, whom he visited familiarly, published his *Essay on Man*, but concealed the author; and when Mallet entered one day, Pope asked him slightly what there was new. Mallet told him, that the newest piece was something called an *Essay on Man*, which he had inspected idly; and seeing the utter inability of the author, who had neither skill in writing nor knowledge of his subject, had tossed it away. Pope, to punish his self-conceit, told him the secret.

A new edition of the works of Bacon being prepared (1740) for the press, Mallet was employed to prefix a Life, which he has written with elegance, perhaps with some affectation; but with so much more knowledge of history than of science, that when he afterwards undertook the life of Marlborough, Warburton remarked, that he might perhaps forget that Marlborough was a general, as he had forgotten that Bacon was a philosopher.

When

When the prince of Wales was driven from the palace, and, setting himself at the head of the opposition, kept a separate Court, he endeavoured to increase his popularity by the patronage of literature, and made Mallet his under-secretary, with a salary of two hundred pounds a year: Thomson likewise had a pension; and they were associated in the composition of the Masque of *Alfred*, which in its original state was played at Cliefden in 1740; it was afterwards almost wholly changed by Mallet, and brought upon the stage at Drury-Lane in 1751, but with no great success.

Mallet, in a familiar conversation with Garrick, discoursing of the diligence which he was then exerting upon the Life of *Marlborough*, let him know that in the series of great men, quickly to be exhibited, he should find a niche for the hero of the theatre. Garrick professed to wonder by what artifice he could be introduced; but Mallet let him know, that, by a dexterous anticipation, he should fix him in a conspicuous place. "Mr. Mallet," says Garrick, in his gratitude of exultation, "have you left off to write for the stage?" Mallet then confessed that he had a drama in his hands. Garrick promised to act it; and *Alfred* was produced.

The long retardation of the Life of the duke of Marlborough shews, with strong conviction, how little confidence can be placed in posthumous renown. When he died, it was soon determined that his story should be delivered to posterity; and the papers supposed to contain the necessary information were delivered to the Lord Moleworth, who had been his favourite in Flanders. When Moleworth died, the same papers were transferred with the same design to Sir Richard Steele, who in some of his exigencies put them in pawn. They then remained with the old dutchess, who in her will assigned the task to Glover and Mallet, with a reward of a thousand pounds, and a prohibition to insert any verses. Glover rejected, I suppose, with disdain the legacy, and devolved the whole work upon Mallet; who had from the late duke of Marlborough a pension to promote his industry, and who talked of the discoveries which he made; but left not, when he died, any historical labours behind him.

While he was in the Prince's service he published *Mustapha*, with a Prologue by Thomson, not mean, but far inferior to that which he had received from Mallet for *Agamemnon*. The Epilogue, said to be written by a friend, was composed in haste by Mallet, in the place of one promised, which was never given. This
tragedy

tragedy was dedicated to the Prince his master. It was acted at Drury-Lane in 1739, and was well received, but was never revived.

In 1740, he produced, as has been already mentioned, the masque of *Alfred*, in conjunction with Thomson.

For some time afterwards he lay at rest. After a long interval, his next work was *Amyntor and Theodora* (1747), a long story in blank verse; in which it cannot be denied that there is copiousness and elegance of language, vigour of sentiment, and imagery well adapted to take possession of the fancy. But it is blank verse. The first sale was not great, and it is now lost in forgetfulness.

Mallet, by address or accident, perhaps by his dependance on the Prince, found his way to Bolingbroke; a man whose pride and petulance made his kindness difficult to gain, or keep, and whom Mallet was content to court by an act, which, I hope, was unwillingly performed. When it was found that Pope had clandestinely printed an unauthorised number of the pamphlet called the *Patriot King*, Bolingbroke, in a fit of useless fury, resolved to blast his memory, and employed Mallet (1747) as the executioner of his vengeance. Mallet had not virtue, or had not spirit, to refuse the office; and

and was rewarded, not long after, with the legacy of lord Bolingbroke's works.

Many of the political pieces had been written during the opposition to Walpole, and given to Franklin, as he supposed, in perpetuity. These, among the rest, were claimed by the will. The question was referred to arbitrators; but when they decided against Mallet, he refused to yield to the award; and by the help of Millar the bookseller published all that he could find, but with success very much below his expectation.

In 1753, his masque of *Britannia* was acted at Drury-Lane, and his tragedy of *Elvira* in 1763; in which year he was appointed keeper of the book of Entries for ships in the port of London.

In the beginning of the last war when the nation was exasperated by ill success, he was employed to turn the publick vengeance upon Byng, and wrote a letter of accusation under the character of a *Plain Man*. The paper was with great industry circulated and dispersed; and he for his seasonable intervention had a considerable pension bestowed upon him, which he retained to his death.

Towards

Towards the end of his life he went with his wife to France; but after a while, finding his health declining, he returned alone to England, and died in April 1765.

He was twice married, and by his first wife had several children. One daughter, who married an Italian of rank named Cilefia, wrote a tragedy called *Almida*, which was acted at Drury-Lane. His second wife was the daughter of a nobleman's steward, who had a considerable fortune, which she took care to retain in her own hands.

His stature was diminutive, but he was regularly formed; his appearance, till he grew corpulent, was agreeable, and he suffered it to want no recommendation that dress could give it. His conversation was elegant and easy. The rest of his character may, without injury to his memory, sink into silence.

As a writer, he cannot be placed in any high class. There is no species of composition in which he was eminent. His Dramas had their day, a short day, and are forgotten: his blank verse seems to my ear the echo of Thomson. His *Life of Bacon* is known as it is appended to Bacon's volumes, but is no longer mentioned. His works are such as a writer, bustling in the world, shewing himself in public,

lick, and emerging occasionally from time to time into notice, might keep alive by his personal influence; but which, conveying little information, and giving no great pleasure, must soon give way, as the succession of things produces new topicks of conversation, and other modes of amusement.

S H E N S T O N E.

WILLIAM SHENSTONE, the son of Thomas Shenstone and Anne Pen, was born in November 1714, at the Leasowes in Hales-Owen, one of those insulated districts which, in the division of the kingdom, was appended, for some reason not now discoverable, to a distant county; and which, though surrounded by Warwickshire and Worcestershire, belongs to Shropshire, though perhaps thirty miles distant from any other part of it.

He learned to read of an old dame, whom his poem of the *School-mistress* has delivered to posterity; and soon received such delight from books, that he was always calling for new entertainment, and expected that when any of the family went to market a new book should be brought him, which, when it came, was in fondness carried to bed and laid by him. It is said, that when his request had been neglected, his mother wrapped up a piece of wood

wood of the same form, and pacified him for the night.

As he grew older, he went for a while to the Grammar-school in Hales-Owen, and was placed afterwards with Mr. Crumpton, an eminent school-master at Solihul, where he distinguished himself by the quickness of his progress.

When he was young (June 1724) he was deprived of his father, and soon after (August 1726) of his grandfather; and was, with his brother, who died afterwards unmarried, left to the care of his grandmother, who managed the estate.

From school he was sent in 1732 to Pembroke-College in Oxford, a society which for half a century has been eminent for English poetry and elegant literature. Here it appears that he found delight and advantage; for he continued his name there ten years, though he took no degree. After the first four years he put on the Civilian's gown, but without shewing any intention to engage in the profession.

About the time when he went to Oxford, the death of his grandmother devolved his affairs to the care of the reverend Mr. Dolman
of

of Brome in Staffordshire, whose attention he always mentioned with gratitude.

At Oxford he employed himself upon English poetry; and in 1737 published a small Miscellany, without his name.

He then for a time wandered about, to acquaint himself with life; and was sometimes at London, sometimes at Bath, or any other place of publick resort; but he did not forget his poetry. He published in 1740 his *Judgment of Hercules*, addressed to Mr. Lyttelton, whose interest he supported with great warmth at an election: this was two years afterwards followed by the *School-mistress*.

Mr. Dolman, to whose care he was indebted for his ease and leisure, died in 1745, and the care of his own fortune now fell upon him. He tried to escape it a while, and lived at his house with his tenants, who were distantly related; but finding that imperfect possession inconvenient, he took the whole estate into his own hands, more to the improvement of its beauty than the increase of its produce.

Now began his delight in rural pleasures, and his ambition of rural elegance: he began
from

from this time to point his prospects, to diversify his surface, to entangle his walks, and to wind his waters; which he did with such judgement and such fancy, as made his little domain the envy of the great, and the admiration of the skilful; a place to be visited by travellers, and copied by designers. Whether to plant a walk in undulating curves, and to place a bench at every turn where there is an object to catch the view; to make water run where it will be heard, or to stagnate where it will be seen; to leave intervals where the eye will be pleased, and to thicken the plantation where there is something to be hidden, demands any great powers of mind, I will not enquire; perhaps a sullen and surly speculator may think such performances rather the sport than the business of human reason. But it must be at least confessed, that to embellish the form of Nature is an innocent amusement; and some praise must be allowed by the most supercilious observer to him, who does best what such multitudes are contending to do well.

This praise was the praise of Shenstone; but, like all other modes of felicity, it was not enjoyed without its abatements. Lyttelton was his neighbour and his rival, whose empire, spacious

spacious and opulent, looked with disdain on the *petty State* that *appeared behind it*. For a while the inhabitants of Hagley affected to tell their acquaintance of the little fellow that was trying to make himself admired; but when by degrees the Leafowes forced themselves into notice, they took care to defeat the curiosity which they could not suppress, by conducting their visitants perversely to inconvenient points of view, and introducing them at the wrong end of a walk to detect a deception; injuries of which Shenstone would heavily complain. Where there is emulation there will be vanity, and where there is vanity there will be folly.

The pleasure of Shenstone was all in his eye; he valued what he valued merely for its looks; nothing raised his indignation more than to ask if there were any fishes in his water.

His house was mean, and he did not improve it; his care was of his grounds. When he came home from his walks he might find his floors flooded by a shower through the broken roof; but could spare no money for its reparation.

In

In time his expences brought clamours about him, that overpowered the lamb's bleat and the linnet's song; and his groves were haunted by beings very different from fawns and fairies. He spent his estate in adorning it, and his death was probably hastened by his anxieties. He was a lamp that spent its oil in blazing. It is said, that if he had lived a little longer he would have been assisted by a pension: such bounty could not have been ever more properly bestowed; but that it was ever asked is not certain; it is too certain that it never was enjoyed.

He died at the Leasowes, of a putrid fever, about five on Friday morning, February 11, 1763; and was buried by the side of his brother in the church-yard of Hales-Owen.

He was never married, though he might have obtained the lady, whoever she was, to whom his *Pastoral Ballad* was addressed. He is represented by his friend Doddsley as a man of great tenderness and generosity, kind to all that were within his influence; but, if once offended, not easily appeased; inattentive to œconomy, and careless of his expences; in his person larger than the middle size, with something clumsy in his form; very negligent of his
cloaths,

cloaths, and remarkable for wearing his grey hair in a particular manner; for he held that the fashion was no rule of dress, and that every man was to suit his appearance to his natural form.

His mind was not very comprehensive, nor his curiosity active; he had no value for those parts of knowledge which he had not himself cultivated.

His life was unstained by any crime; the *Elegy on Jessy*, which has been supposed to relate an unfortunate and criminal amour of his own, was known by his friends to have been suggested by the story of Miss Godfrey in Richardson's *Pamela*.

What Gray thought of his character, from the perusal of his Letters, was this:

“ I have read too an octavo volume of Shen-
 “ stone's Letters. Poor man! he was always
 “ wishing for money, for fame, and other dis-
 “ tinctions; and his whole philosophy consist-
 “ ed in living against his will in retirement,
 “ and in a place which his taste had adorned;
 “ but which he only enjoyed when people of
 “ note came to see and commend it: his cor-
 “ respondence is about nothing else but this
 “ place

"place and his own writings, with two or
"three neighbouring clergymen, who wrote
"verses too."

His poems consist of elegies, odes, and ballads, humorous fallies, and moral pieces.

His conception of an Elegy he has in his Preface very judiciously and discriminately explained. It is, according to his account, the effusion of a contemplative mind, sometimes plaintive, and always serious, and therefore superior to the glitter of slight ornaments. His compositions suit not ill to this description. His topicks of praise are the domestick virtues, and his thoughts are pure and simple; but, wanting combination, they want variety. The peace of solitude, the innocence of inactivity, and the unenvied security of an humble station, can fill but a few pages. That of which the essence is uniformity will be soon described. His Elegies have therefore too much resemblance of each other.

The lines are sometimes, such as Elegy requires, smooth and easy; but to this praise his claim is not constant: his diction is often harsh, improper, and affected; his words ill-coined, or ill-chosen, and his phrase unskilfully inverted.

The

The Lyrick Poems are almost all of the light and airy kind, such as trip lightly and nimbly along, without the load of any weighty meaning. From these, however, *Rural Elegance* has some right to be excepted. I once heard it praised by a very learned lady; and though the lines are irregular, and the thoughts diffused with too much verbosity, yet it cannot be denied to contain both philosophical argument and poetical spirit.

Of the rest I cannot think any excellent; the *Skylark* pleases me best, which has however more of the epigram than of the ode.

But the four parts of his *Pastoral Ballad* demand particular notice. I cannot but regret that it is pastoral; an intelligent reader, acquainted with the scenes of real life, sickens at the mention of the *crook*, the *pipe*, the *sheep*, and the *kids*, which it is not necessary to bring forward to notice, for the poet's art is selection, and he ought to shew the beauties without the grossness of the country life. His stanza seems to have been chosen in imitation of Rowe's *Despairing Shepherd*.

In the first part are two passages, to which if any mind denies its sympathy, it has no acquaintance with love or nature :

I priz'd every hour that went by,
Beyond all that had pleas'd me before;
But now they are past, and I sigh,
And I grieve that I priz'd them no more.

When forc'd the fair nymph to forgo,
What anguish I felt in my heart!
Yet I thought—but it might not be so,
'Twas with pain that she saw me depart.

She gaz'd, as I slowly withdrew;
My path I could hardly discern;
So sweetly she bade me adieu,
I thought that she bade me return.

In the second this passage has its prettiness, though it be not equal to the former :

I have found out a gift for my fair;
I have found where the wood-pigeons breed:
But let me that plunder forbear,
She will say 'twas a barbarous deed:
For he ne'er could be true, she averr'd,
Who could rob a poor bird of its young;
And I lov'd her the more, when I heard
Such tenderness fall from her tongue.

In the third he mentions the common places of amorous poetry with some address:

'Tis his with mock passion to glow;
 'Tis his in smooth tales to unfold,
 How her face is as bright as the snow,
 And her bosom, be sure, is as cold:
 How the nightingales labour the strain,
 With the notes of his charmer to vie;
 How they vary their accents in vain,
 Repine at her triumphs, and die.

In the fourth I find nothing better than this natural strain of Hope:

Alas! from the day that we met,
 What hope of an end to my woes?
 When I cannot endure to forget
 The glance that undid my repose.
 Yet Time may diminish the pain:
 The flower, and the shrub, and the tree,
 Which I rear'd for her pleasure in vain,
 In time may have comfort for me.

His *Levities* are by their title exempted from the severities of criticism; yet it may be remarked, in a few words, that his humour is sometimes gross, and seldom spritely.

Of the Moral Poems the first is the *Choice of Hercules*, from Xenophon. The numbers are smooth, the diction elegant, and the thoughts just; but something of vigour perhaps is still to be wished, which it might have had by brevity and compression. His *Fate of Delicacy* has an airy gaiety, but not a very pointed general moral. His blank verses, those that can read them may probably find to be like the blank verses of his neighbours. *Love and Honour* is derived from the old ballad, *Did you not hear of a Spanish Lady*—I wish it well enough to wish it were in rhyme.

The *School-mistress*, of which I know not what claim it has to stand among the Moral Works, is surely the most pleasing of Shenstone's performances. The adoption of a particular stile, in light and short compositions, contributes much to the increase of pleasure: we are entertained at once with two imitations, of nature in the sentiments, of the original author in the stile, and between them the mind is kept in perpetual employment.

The general recommendation of Shenstone is easiness and simplicity; his general defect is want of comprehension and variety.

riety. Had his mind been better stored with knowledge, whether he could have been great, I know not; he could certainly have been agreeable.

A K E N S I D E.

MARK AKENSIDE was born on the ninth of November, 1721, at Newcastle upon Tyne. His father, Mark, was a butcher of the Presbyterian sect; his mother's name was Mary Lumfden. He received the first part of his education at the grammar-school of Newcastle; and was afterwards instructed by Mr. Wilson, who kept a private academy.

At the age of eighteen he was sent to Edinburgh, that he might qualify himself for the office of a dissenting minister, and received some assistance from the fund which the Dissenters employ in educating young men of scanty fortune. But a wider view of the world opened other scenes, and prompted other hopes: he determined to study physic, and repaid that contribution, which, being received for a different purpose, he justly thought it dishonourable to retain.

Whether,

Whether, when he resolved not to be a dissenting minister, he ceased to be a Dissenter, I know not. He certainly retained an unnecessary and outrageous zeal for what he called and thought liberty; a zeal which sometimes disguises from the world, and not rarely from the mind which it possesses, an envious desire of plundering wealth or degrading greatness; and of which the immediate tendency is innovation and anarchy, an impetuous eagerness to subvert and confound, with very little care what shall be established.

Akenfide was one of those poets who have felt very early the motions of genius, and one of those students who have very early stored their memories with sentiments and images. Many of his performances were produced in his youth; and his greatest work, *The Pleasures of Imagination*, appeared in 1744. I have heard Doddsley, by whom it was published, relate, that when the copy was offered him, the price demanded for it, which was an hundred and twenty pounds, being such as he was not inclined to give precipitately, he carried the work to Pope, who, having looked into it, advised him not to make a niggardly offer; for *this was no every-day writer.*

In 1741 he went to Leyden, in pursuit of medical knowledge; and three years afterwards

wards (May 16, 1744) became doctor of physick, having, according to the custom of the Dutch Universities, published a thesis, or dissertation. The subject which he chose was *the Original and Growth of the Human Fœtus*; in which he is said to have departed, with great judgement, from the opinion then established, and to have delivered that which has been since confirmed and received.

Akenfide was a young man, warm with every notion that by nature or accident had been connected with the sound of liberty, and by an excentricity which such dispositions do not easily avoid, a lover of contradiction, and no friend to any thing established. He adopted Shaftesbury's foolish assertion of the efficacy of ridicule for the discovery of truth. For this he was attacked by Warburton, and defended by Dyson: Warburton afterwards reprinted his remarks at the end of his dedication to the Freethinkers.

The result of all the arguments which have been produced in a long and eager discussion of this idle question, may be easily collected. If ridicule be applied to any position as the test of truth, it will then become a question whether such ridicule be just; and this can only be decided by the application of truth, as the test of ridicule. Two men, fearing, one a
real

real and the other a fancied danger, will be for a while equally exposed to the inevitable consequences of cowardice, contemptuous censure, and ludicrous representation ; and the true state of both cases must be known, before it can be decided whose terror is rational, and whose is ridiculous ; who is to be pitied, and who to be despised.

In the revival of his poem, which he died before he had finished, he omitted the lines which had given occasion to Walsburton's objections.

He published, soon after his return from Leyden (1745), his first collection of odes ; and was impelled by his rage of patriotism to write a very acrimonious epistle to Pulteney, whom he stigmatizes, under the name of Curio, as the betrayer of his country.

Being now to live by his profession, he first commenced physician at Northampton, where Dr. Stonehouse then practised, with such reputation and success, that a stranger was not likely to gain ground upon him. Akenfide tried the contest awhile ; and, having deafened the place with clamours for liberty, removed to Hampstead, where he resided more than two years, and then fixed himself in London, the proper

proper place for a man of accomplishments like his.

At London he was known as a poet, but was still to make his way as a physician; and would perhaps have been reduced to great exigencies, but that Mr. Dyson, with an ardour of friendship that has not many examples, allowed him three hundred pounds a year. Thus supported, he advanced gradually in medical reputation, but never attained any great extent of practice, or eminence of popularity. A physician in a great city seems to be the mere plaything of Fortune; his degree of reputation is, for the most part, totally casual: they that employ him, know not his excellence; they that reject him, know not his deficiency. By an acute observer, who had looked on the transactions of the medical world for half a century, a very curious book might be written on the *Fortune of Physicians*.

Akenfide appears not to have been wanting to his own success: he placed himself in view by all the common methods; he became a Fellow of the Royal Society; he obtained a degree at Cambridge, and was admitted into the College of Physicians; he wrote little poetry, but published, from time to time, medical essays and observations; he became physician to St. Thomas's Hospital; having read the Gulsonian Lectures

Lectures in Anatomy, he began to give, for the Cronian Lecture, a history of the revival of Learning, from which he soon desisted; and, in conversation, he very eagerly forced himself into notice by an ambitious ostentation of elegance and literature.

His Discourse on the Dysentery (1764) was considered as a very conspicuous specimen of Latinity, which entitled him to the same height of place among the scholars as he possessed before among the wits; and he might perhaps have risen to a greater elevation of character, but that his studies were ended with his life, by a putrid fever, June 23, 1770, in the forty-ninth year of his age.

AKENSIDE is to be considered as a didactick and lyrick poet. His great work is the *Pleasures of Imagination*; a performance which, published, as it was, at the age of twenty-three, raised expectations which were not afterwards very amply satisfied. It has undoubtedly a just claim to very particular notice, as an example of great felicity of genius, and uncommon amplitude of acquisitions, of a young mind stored with images, and much exercised in combining and comparing them.

With the philosophical or religious tenets of the author I have nothing to do; my business is with his poetry. The subject is well-chosen, as it includes all images that can strike or please, and thus comprises every species of poetical delight. The only difficulty is in the choice of examples and illustrations, and it is not easy in such exuberance of matter to find the middle point between penury and satiety. The parts seem artificially disposed, with sufficient coherence, so as that they cannot change their places without injury to the general design.

His images are displayed with such luxuriance of expression, that they are hidden, like
Butler's

Butler's Moon, by a *Veil of Light*; they are forms fantastically lost under superfluity of drefs. *Pars minima est ipsa Puella sui.* The words are multiplied till the sense is hardly perceived; attention deserts the mind, and settles in the ear. The reader wanders through the gay diffusion sometimes amazed, and sometimes delighted; but, after many turnings in the flowery labyrinth, comes out as he went in. He remarked little, and laid hold on nothing.

To his versification justice requires that praise should not be denied. In the general fabrication of his lines he is perhaps superior to any other writer of blank verse; his flow is smooth, and his pauses are musical; but the concatenation of his verses is commonly too long continued, and the full close does not recur with sufficient frequency. The sense is carried on through a long intertexture of complicated clauses, and as nothing is distinguished, nothing is remembered.

The exemption which blank verse affords from the necessity of closing the sense with the couplet, betrays luxuriant and active minds into such indulgence, that they pile image upon image, ornament upon ornament, and are not easily persuaded to close the sense at all. Blank verse will therefore, I fear, be too

too often found in description exuberant, in argument loquacious, and in narration tiresome.

His diction is certainly so far poetical as it is not prosaick, and so far valuable as it is not common. He is to be commended as having fewer artifices of disgust than most of his brethren of the blank song. He rarely either recalls old phrases or twists his metre into harsh inversions. The sense however of his words is strained; when *he views the Ganges from Alpine heights*; that is, from mountains like the Alps. And the pedant surely intrudes, but when was blank verse without pedantry? when he tells how *Planets absolve the stated round of Time*.

It is generally known to the readers of poetry that he intended to revise and augment this work, but died before he had completed his design. The reformed work as he left it, and the addition which he had made, are very properly retained in the new collection. He seems to have somewhat contracted his diffusion; but I know not whether he has gained in closeness what he has lost in splendor. In the additional book, the *Tale of Solon* is too long.

His

His other poems are now to be considered; but a short consideration will dispatch them. It is not easy to guess why he addicted himself so diligently to lyrick poetry, having neither the ease and airiness of the lighter, nor the vehemence and elevation of the grander ode. When he lays his ill-fated hand upon his harp, his former powers seem to desert him; he has no longer his luxuriance of expression, nor variety of images. His thoughts are cold, and his words inelegant. Yet such was his love of lyricks, that, having written with great vigour and poignancy his *Epistle to Curio*, he transformed it afterwards into an ode disgraceful only to its author.

Of his odes nothing favourable can be said; the sentiments commonly want force, nature, or novelty; the diction is sometimes harsh and uncouth, the stanzas ill-constructed and unpleasant, and the rhymes dissonant, or unskilfully disposed, too distant from each other, or arranged with too little regard to established use, and therefore perplexing to the ear, which in a short composition has not time to grow familiar with an innovation.

To examine such compositions singly, cannot be required; they have doubtless brighter and darker parts: but when they are
once

once found to be generally dull, all further labour may be spared; for to what use can the work be criticised that will not be read?

 L Y T T E L T O N.

GEORGE LYTTTELTON, the son of Sir Thomas Lyttelton of Hagley in Worcester-shire, was born in 1709. He was educated at Eaton, where he was so much distinguished, that his exercises were recommended as models to his school-fellows.

From Eaton he went to Christ-church, where he retained the same reputation of superiority, and displayed his abilities to the publick in a poem on *Blenheim*.

He was a very early writer, both in verse and prose. His *Progress of Love*, and his *Persian Letters*, were both written when he was very young; and, indeed, the character of a young man is very visible in both. The Verses cant of shepherds and flocks, and crooks dressed with flowers; and the Letters have something of that indistinct and headstrong ar-

dour for liberty which a man of genius always catches when he enters the world, and always suffers to cool as he passes forward.

He staid not long at Oxford; for in 1728 he began his travels, and saw France and Italy. When he returned he obtained a seat in parliament, and soon distinguished himself among the most eager opponents of Sir Robert Walpole, though his father, who was one of the Admiralty, always voted with the Court.

For many years the name of George Lyttelton was seen in every account of every debate in the House of Commons. He opposed the standing army; he opposed the excise; he supported the motion for petitioning the King to remove Walpole. His zeal was considered by the courtiers not only as violent, but as acrimonious and malignant; and when Walpole was at last driven from his places, every effort was made by his friends, and many friends he had, to exclude Lyttelton from the Secret Committee.

The Prince of Wales, being (1737) driven from St. James's, kept a separate court, and opened his arms to the opponents of the ministry. Mr. Lyttelton was made his secretary,

ry, and was supposed to have great influence in the direction of his conduct. He persuaded his master, whose business it was now to be popular, that he would advance his character by patronage. Mallet was made under-secretary, and Thomson had a pension. For Thomson, Lyttelton always retained his kindness, and was able at last to place him at ease.

Moore courted his favour by an apologetical poem, called *The Trial of Selim*, for which he was paid with kind words, which, as is common, raised great hopes, that at last were disappointed.

Lyttelton now stood in the first rank of opposition; and Pope, who was incited, it is not easy to say how, to increase the clamour against the ministry, commended him among the other patriots. This drew upon him the reproaches of Fox, who, in the house imputed to him as a crime his intimacy with a lampooner so unjust and licentious. Lyttelton supported his friend, and replied, that he thought it an honour to be received into the familiarity of so great a poet.

While

While he was thus conspicuous, he married (1741) Miss Lucy Fortescue of Devonshire, by whom he had a son, the late Lord Lyttelton, and two daughters, and with whom he appears to have lived in the highest degree of connubial felicity: but human pleasures are short; she died in childbed about five years afterwards, and he solaced his grief by writing a long poem to her memory.

He did not however condemn himself to perpetual solitude and sorrow; for, after a while, he was content to seek happiness again by a second marriage with the daughter of Sir Robert Rich; but the experiment was unsuccessful.

At length, after a long struggle, Walpole gave way, and honour and profit were distributed among his conquerors. Lyttelton was made (1744) one of the Lords of the Treasury; and from that time was engaged in supporting the schemes of the ministry.

Politicks did not, however, so much engage him as to withhold his thoughts from things of more importance. He had, in the pride of juvenile confidence, with the help of corrupt conversation, entertained doubts of the truth of Christianity; but he thought the time now
come

come when it was no longer fit to doubt or believe by chance, and applied himself seriously to the great question. His studies, being honest, ended in conviction. He found that religion was true, and what he had learned he endeavoured to teach (1747), by *Observations on the Conversion of St. Paul*; a treatise to which infidelity has never been able to fabricate a specious answer. This book his father had the happiness of seeing, and expressed his pleasure in a letter which deserves to be inserted.

“ I have read your religious treatise with infinite pleasure and satisfaction. The style is fine and clear, the arguments close, cogent, and irresistible. May the King of kings, whose glorious cause you have so well defended, reward your pious labours, and grant that I may be found worthy through the merits of Jesus Christ, to be an eye-witness of that happiness which I don't doubt he will bountifully bestow upon you. In the mean time, I shall never cease glorifying God for having endowed you with such useful talents, and giving me so good a son.

“ Your affectionate father,
“ THOMAS LYTTTELTON.”

A few years afterwards (1751), by the death of his father, he inherited a baronet's title with
a large

a large estate, which, though perhaps he did not augment, he was careful to adorn, by a house of great elegance and expence, and by great attention to the decoration of his park.

As he continued his exertions in parliament, he was gradually advancing his claim to profit and preferment; and accordingly was made in time (1754) cofferer and privy counsellor: this place he exchanged next year for the great office of chancellor of the Exchequer; an office, however, that required some qualifications which he soon perceived himself to want.

The year after, his curiosity led him into Wales; of which he has given an account, perhaps rather with too much affectation of delight, to Archibald Bower, a man of whom he had conceived an opinion more favourable than he seems to have deserved, and whom, having once espoused his interest and fame, he never was persuaded to disown. Bower, whatever was his character, did ^{not} ~~not~~ abilities; attacked as he was by an universal outcry, and that outcry, as it seems, the echo of truth, he kept his ground; at last, when his defences began to fail him, he sallied out upon his adversaries, and his adversaries retreated.

About

About this time Lyttelton published his *Dialogues of the Dead*, which were very eagerly read, though the production rather, as it seems, of leisure than of study, rather effusions than compositions. The names of his persons too often enable the reader to anticipate their conversation; and when they have met, they too often part without conclusion. He has copied *Fenelon* more than *Fontenelle*.

When they were first published they were kindly commended by the *Critical Reviewers*; and poor Lyttelton, with humble gratitude, returned his acknowledgements in a note which I have read; acknowledgements either for flattery or justice.

When, in the latter part of the last reign, the inauspicious commencement of the war made the dissolution of the ministry unavoidable, Sir George Lyttelton, losing his employment, with the rest, was recompensed with a peerage; and rested from political turbulence in the House of Lords.

His last literary production was his *History of Henry the Second*, elaborated by the searches and deliberations of twenty years, and published

lished with such anxiety as only vanity can dictate.

The story of this publication is remarkable. The whole work was printed twice over, a great part of it three times, and many sheets four or five times. The booksellers paid for the first impression; but the charges and repeated operations of the Press were at the expence of the author, whose ambitious accuracy is known to have cost him at least a thousand pounds. He began to print in 1755. Three volumes appeared in 1764, a second edition of them in 1767, a third edition in 1768, and the conclusion in 1771.

Andrew Reid, a man not without considerable abilities, and not unacquainted with letters or with life, undertook to persuade Lyttelton, as he had persuaded himself, that he was master of the secret of punctuation; and, as fear begets credulity, he was employed, I know not at what price, to point the pages of *Henry the Second*. The book was at last pointed and printed, and sent into the world. Lyttelton took money for his copy, of which, when he had paid the *Pointer*, he probably gave the rest away; for he was very liberal to the indigent.

When

When time brought the History to a third edition, Reid was either dead or discarded; and the superintendence of typography and punctuation was committed to a man originally a comb-maker, but then known by the stile of Dr. Saunders. Something uncommon was probably expected, and something uncommon was at last done; for to the edition of Dr. Saunders is appended, what the world had hardly seen before, a list of errors of nineteen pages.

But to politicks and literature there must be an end. Lord Lyttelton had never the appearance of a strong or of a healthy man; he had a slender uncompact frame, and a meagre face: he lasted however sixty years, and then was seized with his last illness. Of his death a very affecting and instructive account has been given by his physician, which will spare me the task of his moral character.

“ On Sunday evening the symptoms of his
 “ lordship’s disorder, which for a week past
 “ had alarmed us, put on a fatal appearance,
 “ and his lordship believed himself to be a
 “ dying man. From this time he suffered by
 “ restlessness rather than pain; and though
 “ his nerves were apparently much fluttered,
 “ his

“ his mental faculties never seemed stronger,
“ when he was thoroughly awake.

“ His lordship’s bilious and hepatic com-
“ plaints seemed alone not equal to the expect-
“ ed mournful event; his long want of sleep,
“ whether the consequence of the irritation in
“ the bowels, or, which is more probable, of
“ causes of different kind, accounts for his
“ loss of strength, and for his death very suffi-
“ ciently.

“ Though his lordship wished his approach-
“ ing dissolution not to be lingering, he waited
“ for it with resignation. He said, “ It is a
“ folly, a keeping me in misery, now to attempt
“ to prolong life;” yet he was easily persuaded,
“ for the satisfaction of others, to do or take
“ any thing thought proper for him. On Sa-
“ turday he had been remarkably better, and
“ we were not without some hopes of his re-
“ covery.

“ On Sunday, about eleven in the forenoon,
“ his lordship sent for me, and said he felt a
“ great hurry, and wished to have a little con-
“ versation with me in order to divert it. He
“ then proceeded to open the fountain of
“ that heart, from whence goodness had so
“ long flowed as from a copious spring. “ Doc-
“ tor,”

"tor," said he, "you shall be my confessor :
 "when I first set out in the world, I had
 "friends who endeavoured to shake my belief
 "in the Christian religion. I saw difficulties
 "which staggered me; but I kept my mind
 "open to conviction. The evidences and
 "doctrines of Christianity, studied with atten-
 "tion, made me a most firm and persuaded
 "believer of the Christian religion. I have
 "made it the rule of my life, and it is the
 "ground of my future hopes. I have erred
 "and sinned; but have repented, and never
 "indulged any vicious habit. In politicks, and
 "publick life, I have made public good the
 "rule of my conduct. I never gave counsels
 "which I did not at the time think the best.
 "I have seen that I was sometimes in the
 "wrong, but I did not err designedly. I have
 "endeavoured, in private life, to do all the
 "good in my power, and never for a moment
 "could indulge malicious or unjust designs up-
 "on any person whatsoever."

"At another time he said, "I must leave my
 "soul in the same state it was in before this
 "illness; I find this a very inconvenient time
 "for solicitude about any thing."

"On the evening, when the symptoms of
 "death came on, he said, "I shall die; but it
 "will

“ will not be your fault.” When lord and lady
 “ Valentia came to see his lordship, he gave
 “ them his solemn benediction, and said, “ Be
 “ good, be virtuous, my lord; you must come
 “ to this.” Thus he continued giving his dy-
 “ ing benediction to all around him. On Mon-
 “ day morning a lucid interval gave some small
 “ hopes, but these vanished in the evening; and
 “ he continued dying, but with very little un-
 “ easiness, till Tuesday morning, August 22,
 “ when between seven and eight o’clock he ex-
 “ pired, almost without a groan.”

His lordship was buried at Hagley; and the following inscription is cut on the side of his lady’s monument :

“ This unadorned stone was placed here
 “ By the particular desire and express
 “ directions of the late Right Honourable
 “ GEORGE LORD LYTTTELTON.
 “ Who died August 22, 1773, aged 64.”

Lord Lyttelton’s Poems are the works of a man of literature and judgement, devoting part of his time to versification. They have nothing to be despised, and little to be admired. Of his *Progress of Love*, it is sufficient blame to say that it is pastoral. His blank verse in *Blenheim* has neither much force nor much elegance.

elegance. His little performances, whether Songs or Epigrams, are sometimes spritely and sometimes insipid. His epistolary pieces have a smooth equability, which cannot much tire, because they are short, but which seldom *elevates* or *surprizes*. But from this censure ought to be excepted his *Advice to Belinda*, which, though for the most part written when he was very young, contains much truth and much prudence, very elegantly and vigorously expressed, and shews a mind attentive to life, and a power of poetry which cultivation might have raised to excellence.

W E S T.

GILBERT WEST is one of the writers of whom I regret my inability to give a sufficient account; the intelligence which my enquiries have obtained is general and scanty.

He was the son of the reverend Dr. West; perhaps him who published *Pindar* at Oxford about the beginning of this century. His mother was sister to Sir Richard Temple, afterwards Lord Cobham. His father, purposing to educate him for the Church, sent him first to Eton, and afterwards to Oxford; but he was seduced to a more airy mode of life, by a commission in a troop of horse procured him by his uncle.

He continued some time in the army; though it is reasonable to suppose that he never sunk into a mere soldier, nor ever lost the love or much neglected the pursuit of learning; and afterwards, finding himself more inclined to

civil employment, he laid down his commission, and engaged in business under the Lord Townshend, then secretary of state, with whom he attended the King to Hanover.

His adherence to Lord Townshend ended in nothing but a nomination (May 1729) to be clerk-extraordinary of the Privy Council, which produced no immediate profit; for it only placed him in a state of expectation and right of succession, and it was very long before a vacancy admitted him to profit.

Soon afterwards he married, and settled himself in a very pleasant house at Wickham in Kent, where he devoted himself to learning, and to piety. Of his learning the new Collection exhibits evidence, which would have been yet fuller if the dissertations which accompany his version of Pindar had not been improperly omitted. Of his piety the influence has, I hope, been extended far by his *Observations on the Resurrection*, published in 1747, for which the University of Oxford created him a Doctor of Laws by diploma (March 30, 1748); and perhaps it may not be without effect to tell, that he read prayers every evening to his family. Crasshaw is now not the only maker of verses to whom may be given the two venerable names of *Poet and Saint*.

He

He was very often visited by Lyttelton and Pitt, who, when they were weary of faction and debates, used at Wickham to find books and quiet, a decent table, and literary conversation. There is at Wickham a walk made by Pitt; and, what is of far more importance, at Wickham, Lyttelton received that conviction which produced his *Dissertation on St. Paul*.

Mr. West's income was not large; and his friends endeavoured, but without success, to obtain an augmentation. It is reported, that the education of the young prince was offered to him, but that he required a more extensive power of superintendence than it was thought proper to allow him.

In time, however, his revenue was improved; he lived to have one of the lucrative clerkships of the Privy Council (1752), and Mr. Pitt at last had it in his power to make him treasurer of Chelsea Hospital.

He was now sufficiently rich; but wealth came too late to be long enjoyed: nor could it secure him from the calamities of life; he lost (1755) his only son; and the year after (March 26), a stroke of the palsy brought to the grave one of the few poets to whom the grave needed not to be terrible.

His poems are in the new Collection neither selected nor arranged as I should have directed, had either the choice or the order fallen under my care or notice. His *Institution of the Garter* is improperly omitted; instead of the mock tragedy of Lucian, the version from Euripides, if both could not be inserted, should have been taken. Of the *Imitations of Spenser*, one was published before the version of *Pindar*, and should therefore have had the first place.

Of his translations I have only compared the first Olympick Ode with the original, and found my expectation surpassed, both by its elegance and its exactness. He does not confine himself to his author's train of stanzas; for he saw that the difference of the languages required a different mode of versification. The first strophe is eminently happy; in the second he has a little strayed from Pindar's meaning, who says, *if thou, my soul, wishest to speak of games, look not in the desert sky for a planet hotter than the sun, nor shall we tell of nobler games than those of Olympia*. He is sometimes too paraphrastical. Pindar bestows upon Hiero an epithet, which, in one word, signifies *delighting in horses*; a word which, in the translation, generates these lines:

Hiero's

Hiero's royal brows, whose care
Tends the courser's noble breed,
Pleas'd to nurse the pregnant mare,
Pleas'd to train the youthful steed.

Pindar says of Pelops, that *he came alone in the dark to the White Sea*; and West,

Near the billow-beaten side
Of the foam-besilver'd main,
Darkling, and alone, he stood:

which however is less exuberant than the former passage.

A work of this kind must, in a minute examination, discover many imperfections; but West's version, so far as I have considered it, appears to be the product of great labour and great abilities.

His *Institution of the Garter* (1742), which is omitted in the Collection, is written with sufficient knowledge of the manners that prevailed in the age to which it is referred, and with great elegance of diction; but, for want of a process of events, neither knowledge nor elegance preserve the reader from weariness.

His

His *Imitations of Spenser* are very successfully performed, both with respect to the metre, the language, and the fiction; and being engaged at once by the excellence of the sentiments, and the artifice of the copy, the mind has two amusements at once. But such compositions are not to be reckoned among the great achievements of intellects, because their effect is local and temporary; they appeal not to reason or passion, but to memory, and presuppose an accidental and artificial state of mind. An Imitation of Spenser is nothing to a reader, however acute, by whom Spenser has never been perused. Works of this kind may deserve praise, as proofs of great industry, and great nicety of observation; but the highest praise, the praise of genius, they cannot claim. The noblest beauties of art are those of which the effect is co-extended with rational nature, or at least with the whole circle of polished life; what is less than this can be only pretty, the plaything of fashion, and the amusement of a day.

THERE

THERE is in the *Adventurer* a paper of verses given to one of the authors as Mr. West's, and supposed to have been written by him, which, having been left out by the compilers, it is proper to insert here. It should not be concealed, however, that this Elegy is printed with Mr. Jago's name in Doddsley's Collection, and is mentioned as his in a Letter of Shenstone's. Perhaps West gave it without naming the author; and Hawkesworth, receiving it from him, thought it his; for his he thought it, as he told me, and as he tells the publick.

ELE.

E L E G Y,

Occasioned by shooting a BLACKBIRD on Valentine's-
Day.

The sun had chac'd the winter's snow,
And kindly loos'd the frost-bound soil;
The melting streams began to flow,
And plowmen urg'd their annual toil.

'Twas then amid the vernal throng,
Whom Nature wakes to mirth and love,
A Blackbird rais'd his am'rous song,
And thus it echo'd through the grove.

" O! fairest of the feather'd train,
" For whom I sing, for whom I burn;
" Attend with pity to my strain,
" And grant my love a kind return.

" See, fee, the winter's storms are flown,
" And Zephyrs gently fan the air!
" Let us the genial influence own,
" Let us the vernal pastime share.

" The

" The Raven plumes his jetty wing,
" To please his croaking paramour ;
" The Larks responsive love-tales sing,
" And tell their passions as they soar.

" But trust me, love, the Raven's wing
" Is not to be compar'd with mine ;
" Nor can the Lark so sweetly sing
" As I, who strength with sweetness join.

" With thee I'll prove the sweets of love,
" With thee divide the cares of life ;
" No fonder husband in the grove,
" Nor none than thee a happier wife.

" I'll lead thee to the clearest rill,
" Whose streams among the pebbles stray ;
" There will we sit and sip our fill,
" Or on the flow'ry border play.

" I'll guide thee to the thickest brake,
" Impervious to the school-boy's eye :
" For thee the plaster'd nest I'll make,
" And on thy downy pinions lie.

" To get thee food I'll range the fields,
" And cull the best of ev'ry kind ;
" Whatever nature's bounty yields,
" Or love's assiduous care can find.

" And when my lovely mate would stray,
" To taste the summer's sweets at large,
" At home I'll wait the live-long day,
" And tend at home our infant charge.

" When

" When prompted by a mother's care
 " Thy warmth shall form th' imprison'd young,
 " With thee the task I'll fondly share,
 " Or cheer thy labours with my song."

He ceas'd his song. The melting dame
 With tender pity heard his strain;
 She felt, she own'd a mutual flame,
 And hasten'd to relieve his pain.

He led her to the nuptial bow'r,
 And nestled closely to her side,
 The happiest bridegroom in that hour,
 And she the most enamour'd bride.

Next morn he wak'd her with a song—
 " Arise! behold the new-born day!
 " The Lark his matten peal has rung;
 " Arise, my love, and come away!"

Together through the fields they stray'd,
 And to the verdant riv'let's side,
 Renew'd their vows, and hopp'd and play'd,
 With honest joy and decent pride.

But, O! my Muse with pain relates
 The mournful sequel of my tale:
 Sent by an order of the Fates,
 A gunner met them in the vale.

Alarm'd, the lover cry'd, " My dear,
 " Hasten, hasten away; from danger fly!
 " Here, gunner, take thy vengeance, here!
 " O! spare my love, and let me die."

At him the gunner took his aim ;
The aim he took was much too true ;
O ! had he chose some other game,
Or shot as he had us'd to do ! *

Divided pair ! forgive the wrong,
While I with tears your fate rehearse :
I'll join the widow's plaintive song,
And save the lover in my verse.

* Never having killed any thing before or since.

G R A Y.

THOMAS GRAY, the son of Mr. Philip Gray, a scrivener of London, was born in Cornhill, November 26, 1716. His grammatical education he received at Eaton under Mr. Antrobus, his mother's brother; and when he left school, in 1734, entered a pensioner at Peterhouse in Cambridge.

The transition from the school to the college is, to most young scholars, the time from which they date their years of manhood, liberty, and happiness; but Gray seems to have been very little delighted with academical gratifications; he liked at Cambridge neither the mode of life nor the fashion of study, and lived fullenly on to the time when his attendance on lectures was no longer required. As he intended to profess the Common Law, he took no degree.

When

When he had been at Cambridge about five years, Mr. Horace Walpole, whose friendship he had gained at Eaton, invited him to travel with him as his companion. They wandered through France into Italy; and Gray's Letters contain a very pleasing account of many parts of their journey. But unequal friendships are easily dissolved: at Florence they quarrelled, and parted; and Mr. Walpole is now content to have it told that it was by his fault. If we look however without prejudice on the world, we shall find that men, whose consciousness of their own merit sets them above the compliances of servility, are apt enough in their association with superiors to watch their own dignity with troublesome and punctilious jealousy, and in the fervour of independence to exact that attention which they refuse to pay. Part they did, whatever was the quarrel, and the rest of their travels was doubtless more unpleasant to them both. Gray continued his journey in a manner suitable to his own little fortune, with only on occasional servant. *one*

He returned to England in September 1741; and in about two months afterwards buried his father; who had, by an injudicious waste of money upon a new house, so much lessened his fortune, that Gray thought himself too poor

poor to study the law. He therefore retired to Cambridge, where he soon after became Bachelor of Civil Law; and where, without liking the place or its inhabitants, or pretending to like them, he passed, except a short residence at London, the rest of his life.

About this time he was deprived of Mr. West, the son of a chancellor of Ireland, a friend on whom he appears to have set a high value, and who deserved his esteem by the powers which he shews in his Letters, and in the Ode to *May*, which Mr. Mason has preserved, as well as by the sincerity with which, when Gray sent him part of *Agrippina*, a tragedy that he had just begun, he gave an opinion which probably intercepted the progress of the work, and which the judgement of every reader will confirm. It was certainly no loss to the English stage that *Agrippina* was never finished.

In this year (1742) Gray seems first to have applied himself seriously to poetry; for in this year were produced the *Ode to Spring*, his *Prospect of Eaton*, and his *Ode to Adversity*. He began likewise a Latin poem, *de Principiis cogitandi*.

It

It seems to be the opinion of Mr. Mason, that his first ambition was to have excelled in Latin poetry: perhaps it were reasonable to wish that he had prosecuted his design; for though there is at present some embarrassment in his phrase, and some harshness in his Lyrick numbers, his copiousness of language is such as very few possess; and his lines, even when imperfect, discover a writer whom practice would quickly have made skilful.

He now lived on at Peterhouse, very little solicitous what others did or thought, and cultivated his mind and enlarged his views without any other purpose than of improving and amusing himself; when Mr. Mason, being elected fellow of Pembroke-hall, brought him a companion who was afterwards to be his editor, and whose fondness and fidelity has kindled in him a zeal of admiration, which cannot be reasonably expected from the neutrality of a stranger and the coldness of a critick.

In this retirement he wrote (1747) an ode on the *Death of Mr. Walpole's Cat*; and the year afterwards attempted a poem of more importance, on *Government and Education*, of which the fragments which remain have many excellent lines.

His

His next production (1750) was his far-famed *Elegy in the Church-yard*, which, finding its way into a Magazine, first, I believe, made him known to the publick.

An invitation from lady Cobham about this time gave occasion to an odd composition called a *Long Story*, which, though perhaps it adds little to Gray's character, I am not pleased to find wanting in the new Collection. It will therefore be added to this Life.

Several of his pieces were published (1753), with designs, by Mr. Bentley; and, that they might in some form or other make a book, only one side of each leaf was printed. I believe the poems and the plates recommended each other so well, that the whole impression was soon bought. This year he lost his mother.

Some time afterwards (1756) some young men of the college, whose chambers were near his, diverted themselves with disturbing him by frequent and troublesome noises. This insolence, having endured it a while, he represented to the governors of the society, among whom perhaps he had no friends; and, finding his complaint little regarded, removed himself to Pembroke-hall.

In 1757 he published *The Progress of Poetry* and *The Bard*, two compositions at which the readers of poetry were at first content to gaze in mute amazement. Some that tried them confessed their inability to understand them, though Warburton said that they were understood as well as the works of Milton and Shakespeare, which it is the fashion to praise. Garrick wrote a few lines in their praise. Some hardy champions undertook to rescue them from neglect, and in a short time many were content to be shewn beauties which they could not see.

Gray's reputation was now so high, that, after the death of Cibber, he had the honour of refusing the laurel, which was then bestowed on Mr. Whitehead.

His curiosity, not long after, drew him away from Cambridge to a lodging near the Museum, where he resided near three years, reading and transcribing; and, so far as can be discovered, very little affected by two odes on *Oblivion* and *Obscurity*, in which his Lyrick performances were ridiculed with much contempt and much ingenuity.

When the Professor of Modern Languages at Cambridge died, he was, as he says, cockered
and

and spirited up, till he asked it of lord Bute, who sent him a civil refusal; and the place was given to Mr. Bocket, the tutor of Sir James Lowther.

His constitution was weak, and believing that his health was promoted by exercise and change of place, he undertook (1765) a journey into Scotland, of which his account, so far as it extends, is very curious and elegant; for as his comprehension was ample, his curiosity extended to all the works of art, all the appearances of nature, and all the monuments of past events. He naturally contracted a friendship with Dr. Beattie, whom he found a poet, a philosopher, and a good man. The Mareschal College at Aberdeen offered him the degree of Doctor of Laws, which, having omitted to take it at Cambridge, he thought it decent to refuse.

What he had formerly solicited in vain, was at last given him without solicitation. The Professorship of Languages became again vacant, and he received (1768) an offer of it from the duke of Grafton. He accepted, and retained it to his death; always designing lectures, but never reading them; uneasy at his neglect of duty, and appeasing his uneasiness with designs of reformation, and with a reso-

lution which he believed himself to have made of resigning the office, if he found himself unable to discharge it.

Ill health made another journey necessary, and he visited (1769) Westmoreland and Cumberland. He that reads his epistolary narration wishes, that to travel, and to tell his travels, had been more of his employment; but it is by studying at home that we must obtain the ability of travelling with intelligence and improvement.

His travels and his studies were now near their end. The gout, of which he had sustained many weak attacks, fell upon his stomach, and, yielding to no medicines, produced strong convulsions, which (July 30, 1771) terminated in death.

His character I am willing to adopt, as Mr. Mason has done, from a nameless writer; and am as willing as his warmest friend to believe it true.

“ Perhaps he was the most learned man in
“ Europe. He was equally acquainted with
“ the elegant and profound parts of science,
“ and that not superficially but thoroughly.
“ He knew every branch of history, both na-
“ tural

“ tural and civil; had read all the original
“ historians of England, France, and Italy;
“ and was a great antiquarian.” Criticism,
“ metaphysics, morals, politics, made a prin-
“ cipal part of his study; voyages and travels
“ of all sorts were his favourite amusements;
“ and he had a fine taste in painting, prints,
“ architecture, and gardening. With such a
“ fund of knowledge, his conversation must
“ have been equally instructing and entertain-
“ ing; but he was also a good man, a man of
“ virtue and humanity. There is no character
“ without some speck, some imperfection; and
“ I think the greatest defect in his was an af-
“ fection in delicacy, or rather effeminacy,
“ and a visible fastidiousness, or contempt and
“ disdain of his inferiors in science. He also
“ had, in some degree, that weakness which
“ disgusted Voltaire so much in Mr. Congreve:
“ though he seemed to value others chiefly
“ according to the progress they had made in
“ knowledge, yet he could not bear to be
“ considered himself merely as a man of let-
“ ters; and though without birth, or fortune,
“ or station, his desire was to be looked upon
“ as a private independent gentleman, who
“ read for his amusement. Perhaps it may be
“ said, What signifies so much knowledge,
“ when it produced so little? Is it worth
“ taking so much pains to leave no memorial
“ but

“ but a few poems? But let it be considered
“ that Mr. Gray was, to others, at least inno-
“ cently employed; to himself, certainly be-
“ neficially. His time passed agreeably; he
“ was every day making some new acquisition
“ in science; his mind was enlarged, his heart
“ softened, his virtue strengthened; the world
“ and mankind were shewn to him without a
“ mask; and he was taught to consider every
“ thing as trifling, and unworthy of the atten-
“ tion of a wise man, except the pursuit of
“ knowledge and practice of virtue, in that
“ state wherein God hath placed us.”

To this character Mr. Mason has added a more particular account of Gray's skill in zoology. He has remarked, that Gray's effeminacy was affected most *before those whom he did not wish to please*; and that he is unjustly charged with making knowledge his sole reason of preference, as he paid his esteem to none whom he did not likewise believe to be good.

What has occurred to me, from the slight inspection of his letters in which my undertaking has engaged me, is, that his mind had a large grasp; that his curiosity was unlimited, and his judgement cultivated; that he was a man likely to love much where he loved at all,
but

but that he was fastidious and hard to please. His contempt however is often employed, where I hope it will be approved, upon scepticism and infidelity. : His short account of Shaftesbury I will insert.

“ You say you cannot conceive how lord
“ Shaftesbury came to be a philosopher in
“ vogue; I will tell you: first, he was a lord;
“ secondly, he was as vain as any of his read-
“ ers; thirdly, men are very prone to believe
“ what they do not understand; fourthly, they
“ will believe any thing at all, provided they
“ are under no obligation to believe it; fifth-
“ ly, they love to take a new road, even when
“ that road leads no where; sixthly, he was
“ reckoned a fine writer, and seems always to
“ mean more than he said. Would you have
“ any more reasons? An interval of above forty
“ years has pretty well destroyed the charm. A
“ dead lord ranks with commoners: vanity is
“ no longer interested in the matter; for a new
“ road is become an old one.”

Mr. Mason has added, from his own knowledge, that though Gray was poor, he was not eager of money; and that, out of the little that he had, he was very willing to help the necessitous.

As

As a writer he had this peculiarity, that he did not write his pieces first rudely, and then correct them, but laboured every line as it arose in the train of composition; and he had a notion not very peculiar, that he could not write but at certain times, or at happy moments; a fantastick foppery, to which my kindness for a man of learning and of virtue wishes him to have been superior.

GRAY'S Poetry is now to be considered; and I hope not to be looked on as an enemy to his name, if I confess that I contemplate it with less pleasure than his life.

His ode on *Spring* has something poetical, both in the language and the thought; but the language is too luxuriant, and the thoughts have nothing new. There has of late arisen a practice of giving to adjectives, derived from substantives, the termination of participles; such as the *cultured* plain, the *dashed* bank; but I was sorry to see, in the lines of a scholar like Gray, the *bonied* Spring. The morality is natural, but too stale; the conclusion is pretty.

The poem on the *Cat* was doubtless by its author considered as a trifle, but it is not a happy trifle. In the first stanza *the azure flowers that blow*, shew resolutely a rhyme is sometimes made when it cannot easily be found. *Selima the Cat*, is called a nymph, with some violence both to language and sense; but there is good use made of it when it is done; for of the two lines,

What female heart can gold despise?

What cat's averse to fish?

the

the first relates merely to the nymph, and the second only to the cat. The sixth stanza contains a melancholy truth, that *a favourite has no friend*; but the last ends in a pointed sentence of no relation to the purpose; if *what glistened* had been *gold*, the cat would not have gone into the water; and, if she had, would not less have been drowned.

The *Prospect of Eaton College* suggests nothing to Gray, which every beholder does not equally think and feel. His supplication to father *Thames*, to tell him who drives the hoop or tosses the ball, is useless and puerile. Father *Thames* has no better means of knowing than himself. His epithet *buxom health* is not elegant; he seems not to understand the word. Gray thought his language more poetical as it was more remote from common use; finding in Dryden *boney redolent of Spring*, an expression that reaches the utmost limits of our language, Gray drove it a little more beyond common apprehension, by making *gales* to be *redolent of joy and youth*.

Of the *Ode on Adversity*, the hint was at first taken from *O Diva, gratum quæ regis Antium*; but Gray has excelled his original by the variety of his sentiments, and by their moral application. Of this piece, at once poetical and rational,

tional, I will not by slight objections violate the dignity.

My process has now brought me to the *wonderful Wonder of Wonders*, the two Sister Odes; by which, though either vulgar ignorance or common sense at first universally rejected them, many have been since persuaded to think themselves delighted. I am one of those that are willing to be pleased, and therefore would gladly find the meaning of the first stanza of the *Progress of Poetry*.

Gray seems in his rapture to confound the images of *spreading sound* and *running water*. A *stream of Musick* may be allowed; but where does *Musick*, however *smooth and strong*, after having visited the *verdant vales*, *rowl down the steep amain*, so as that *rocks and nodding groves rebellow to the roar*? If this be said of *Musick*, it is nonsense; if it be said of *Water*, it is nothing to the purpose.

The second stanza, exhibiting Mars's ear and Jove's eagle, is unworthy of further notice. Criticism disdains to chase a school-boy to his common places.

To the third it may likewise be objected, that it is drawn from Mythology, though such

as

as may be more easily assimilated to real life. Idalia's *velvet-green* has something of cant. An epithet or metaphor drawn from Nature ennobles Art; an epithet or metaphor drawn from Art degrades Nature. Gray is too fond of words arbitrarily compounded. *Many-twinkling* was formerly censured as not analogical; we may say *many-spotted*, but scarcely *many-spotting*. This stanza, however, has something pleasing.

Of the second ternary of stanzas, the first endeavours to tell something, and would have told it, had it not been crossed by Hyperion: the second describes well enough the universal prevalence of Poetry; but I am afraid that the conclusion will not rise from the premises. The caverns of the North and the plains of Chili are not the residences of *Glory* and *generous Shame*. But that Poetry and Virtue go always together is an opinion so pleasing, that I can forgive him who resolves to think it true.

The third stanza sounds big with *Delphi*, and *Egean*, and *Ilissus*, and *Meander*, and *hallowed fountain* and *solemn sound*; but in all Gray's odes there is a kind of cumbrous splendor which we wish away. His position is at last false: in the time of Dante and Petrarch,
from

from whom he derives our first school of Poetry, Italy was over-run by *tyrant power* and *coward vice*; nor was our state much better when we first borrowed the Italian arts.

Of the third ternary, the first gives a mythological birth of Shakespear. What is said of that mighty genius is true; but it is not said happily: the real effects of his poetical power are put out of sight by the pomp of machinery. Where truth is sufficient to fill the mind, fiction is worse than useless; the counterfeit debases the genuine.

His account of Milton's blindness, if we suppose it caused by study in the formation of his poem, a supposition surely allowable, is poetically true, and happily imagined. But the *car* of Dryden, with his *two coursers*, has nothing in it peculiar; it is a car in which any other rider may be placed.

The Bard appears, at the first view, to be, as Algarotti and others have remarked, an imitation of the prophecy of Nereus. Algarotti thinks it superior to its original; and, if preference depends only on the imagery and animation of the two poems, his judgement is right. There is in *The Bard* more force, more thought, and more variety. But to copy is
less

less than to invent, and the copy has been unhappily produced at a wrong time. The fiction of Horace was to the Romans credible; but its revival disgusts us with apparent and unconquerable falsehood. *Incredulus odi.*

To select a singular event, and swell it to a giant's bulk by fabulous appendages of spectres and predictions, has little difficulty, for he that forsakes the probable may always find the marvellous; and it has little use, we are affected only as we believe; we are improved only as we find something to be imitated or declined. I do not see that *The Bard* promotes any truth, moral or political.

His stanzas are too long, especially his epodes; the ode is finished before the ear has learned its measures, and consequently before it can receive pleasure from their consonance and recurrence.

Of the first stanza the abrupt beginning has been celebrated; but technical beauties can give praise only to the inventor. It is in the power of any man to rush abruptly upon his subject, that has read the ballad of *Johnny Armstrong*.

Is there ever a man in all Scotland—

The

The initial resemblances, or alliterations, *ruin, ruthless, helm nor hauberk*, are below the grandeur of a poem that endeavours at sublimity.

In the second stanza the *Bard* is well described; but in the third we have the puerilities of obsolete mythology. When we are told that *Cadwallo hush'd the stormy main*, and that *Modred made huge Plinlimmon bow his cloud-top'd head*, attention recoils from the repetition of a tale that, even when it was first heard, was heard with scorn.

The *weaving* of the *winding sheet* he borrowed, as he owns, from the northern Bards; but their texture, however, was very properly the work of female powers, as the art of spinning the thread of life in another mythology. Theft is always dangerous; Gray has made weavers of his slaughtered bards, by a fiction outrageous and incongruous. They are then called upon to *Weave the warp, and weave the woof*, perhaps with no great propriety; for it is by crossing the *woof* with the *warp* that men *weave* the *web* or piece; and the first line was dearly bought by the admission of its wretched correspondent, *Give ample room and verge enough*. He has, however, no other line as bad.

The

The third stanza of the second ternary is commended, I think, beyond its merit. The personification is indistinct. *Thirst* and *Hunger* are not alike; and their features, to make the imagery perfect, should have been discriminated. We are told, in the same stanza, how *towers* are *fed*. But I will no longer look for particular faults; yet let it be observed that the ode might have been concluded with an action of better example; but suicide is always to be had, without expence of thought.

These odes are marked by glittering accumulations of ungraceful ornaments; they strike rather than please; the images are magnified by affectation; the language is laboured into harshness. The mind of the writer seems to work with unnatural violence. *Double, double, toil and trouble*. He has a kind of strutting dignity, and is tall by walking on tiptoe. His art and his struggle are too visible, and there is too little appearance of ease or nature.

To say that he has no beauties would be unjust: a man like him, of great learning and great industry, could not but produce something valuable. When he pleases least, it can only be said that a good design was ill directed.

His

His translations of Northern and Welsh Poetry deserve praise; the imagery is preserved, perhaps often improved; but the language is unlike the language of other poets.

In the character of his Elegy I rejoice to concur with the common reader; for by the common sense of readers uncorrupted with literary prejudices, after all the refinements of subtilty and the dogmatism of learning, must be finally decided all claim to poetical honours. The *Church-yard* abounds with images which find a mirror in every mind, and with sentiments to which every bosom returns an echo. The four stanzas beginning *Yet even these bones*, are to me original: I have never seen the notions in any other place; yet he that reads them here, persuades himself that he has always felt them. Had Gray written often thus, it had been vain to blame, and useless to praise him.

This translation of Northern and Welsh poetry deserves praise; the imagery is preserved, perhaps often improved, but the language is unlike the language of other poets.

In the character of his Elvyr I rejoice to connect with the common reader, for by the common sense of readers uncorrupted with literary prejudice, after all the refinements of English and the dogmatism of learning, must be finally decided all claims to poetic honour. The Churchward's rhymes with images which find a mirror in every mind, and with forms and a mirror in every poem returns an echo. The four stanzas beginning "I saw a day" were, one to me original; I have never seen the notions in any other place; yet he that reads them here, perhaps thinks that he has always felt them. Had Gray written often there is not been vain to blame, and ought to praise him.

THESE stanzas on the last of the
of the day to the end of the
of the day to the end of the
of the day to the end of the
of the day to the end of the

A L O N G S T O R Y *.

IN Britain's isle, no matter where,
 An antient pile of building stands :
 The Huntingdons and Hattons there
 Employ'd the power of Fairy hands.

* When Mr. Gray had put his last hand to the celebrated Elegy in the Country Church-yard, he communicated it to his friend Mr. Walpole, whose good taste was too much charmed with it to suffer him to withhold the sight of it from his acquaintance; accordingly it was shewn about for some time in manuscript, and received with all the applause it so justly merited. Amongst the rest of the fashionable world, for to those only it was at present communicated, Lady Cobham, who now lived at the mansion house at Stoke-Pogis, had read and admired it. She wished to be acquainted with the author; accordingly her relation Miss Speed and Lady Schaub, then at her house, undertook to bring this about by making him the first visit. He happened to be from home when the Ladies arrived at his Aunt's solitary mansion; and, when he returned, was surprized to find, written on one of his papers in the parlour where he usually read, the following note: "Lady Schaub's compliments to Mr. Gray; she is sorry not to have found him at home, to tell him that Lady Brown is very well." This necessarily obliged him to return the visit, and soon after induced him to compose a ludicrous account of this little adventure, for the amusement of the Ladies in question. He wrote it in ballad measure, and entitled it a Long Story: when it was handed about in manuscript, nothing could be more various than the opinions concerning it; by some it was thought a master-piece of original humour, by others a wild and fantastic farrago; and when it was published, the sentiments of good judges were equally divided about it. See Mr. Mason's Memoirs, vol. III. p. 125.

To raise the ceiling's fretted height,
Each pannel in atchievements cloathing,
Rich windows that exclude the light,
And passages, that lead to nothing *.

Full oft within the spacious walls,
When he had fifty winters o'er him,
† My grave Lord-Keeper led the brawls;
The seal and maces danc'd before him.

His bushy beard, and shoe-strings green,
His high-crown'd hat, and fatten doublet,
Mov'd the stout heart of England's Queen,
Though Pope and Spaniard could not trouble it.

What, in the very first beginning!
Shame of the versifying tribe!
Your history whither are you spinning!
Can you do nothing but describe?

A house there is (and that's enough)
From whence one fatal morning issues
‡ A brace of warriors, not in buff,
But rustling in their silks and tissues.

* The mansion-house at Stoke-Pogis, then in the possession of Viscountess Cobham. The style of building, which we now call Queen Elizabeth's, is here admirably described, both with regard to its beauties and defects; and the third and fourth stanzas delineate the fantastic manners of her time with equal truth and humour. The house formerly belonged to the Earls of Huntingdon and the family of Hatton. M.

† Sir Christopher Hatton, promoted by Queen Elizabeth for his graceful person and fine dancing. G.—Brawls were a sort of figure-dance, then in vogue, and probably deemed as elegant as our modern Cotillions, or still more modern Quadrilles. M.

‡ The reader is already apprised who these Ladies were; the two descriptions are prettily contrasted; and nothing can be more happily turned than the compliment to Lady Cobham in the eighth stanza. M.

The

The first came cap-a-pee from France,
Her conquering destiny fulfilling,
Whom meaner beauties eye askance,
And vainly ape her art of killing.

The other Amazon kind heaven
Had arm'd with spirit, wit, and satire :
But Cobham had the polish given,
And tipp'd her arrows with good-nature.

To celebrate her eyes, her air—
Coarse panegyrics would but teaze her.
Melissa is her *Nom de Guerre*.
Alas, who would not wish to please her !

With bonnet blue and capuchine,
And aprons long they hid their armour,
And veil'd their weapons bright and keen,
In pity to the country farmer.

Fame, in the shape of * Mr. P—t,
(By this time all the parish know it)
Had told, that thereabouts there lurk'd
A wicked Imp they call a Poet :

Who prowld the country far and near,
Bewitch'd the children of the peasants,
Dried up the cows, and lam'd the deer,
And suck'd the eggs, and kill'd the pheasants.

* I have been told that this Gentleman, a neighbour and acquaintance of Mr. Gray's in the country, was much displeased at the liberty here taken with his name ; yet, surely, without any great reason. M.

My Lady heard their joint petition,
Swore by her coronet and ermine,
She'd issue out her high commission
To rid the manor of such vermin.

The Heroines undertook the task,
Thro' lanes unknown, o'er stiles they ventur'd,
Rap'd at the door, nor stay'd to ask,
But bounce into the parlour enter'd.

The trembling family they daunt,
They flirt, they flog, they laugh, they tattle,
Rummage his Mother, pinch his Aunt,
And up stairs in a whirlwind rattle.

Each hole and cupboard they explore,
Each creek and cranny of his chamber;
Run hurry-skurry round the floor,
And o'er the bed and tester clamber;

Into the drawers and china pry,
Papers and books, a huge imbroglio!
Under a tea-cup he might lie,
Or creas'd, like dogs-ears, in a folio.

On the first marching of the troops,
The Muses, hopeless of his pardon,
Convey'd him underneath their hoops
To a small closet in the garden.

So Rumour says: (who will, believe.)
But that they left the door a-jar,
Where, safe and laughing in his sleeve,
He heard the distant din of war.

Short was his joy. He little knew
 The power of Magic was no fable;
 Out of the window, whisk, they flew,
 But left a spell upon the table.

The words too eager to unriddle,
 The Poet felt a strange disorder:
 Transparent bird-lime form'd the middle,
 And chains invisible the border.

So cunning was the Apparatus,
 The powerful pot-hooks did so move him,
 That, will he, nill he, to the Great-house
 He went, as if the Devil drove him.

Yet on his way (no sign of grace,
 For folks in fear are apt to pray)
 To Phœbus he preferr'd his case,
 And begg'd his aid that dreadful day.

The Godhead would have back'd his quarrel;
 But with a blush, on recollection,
 Own'd, that his quiver and his laurel
 'Gainst four such eyes were no protection.

The court was fat, the culprit there,
 Forth from their gloomy mansions creeping
 The Lady Janes and Joans repair,
 And from the gallery stand peeping:

Such as in silence of the night
 Come (sweep) along some winding entry,
 * (Styack has often seen the sight)
 Or at the chapel-door stand centry:

* The House-keeper. G.

In peaked hoods and mantles tarnished,
 Sour visages, enough to scare ye,
 High dames of honour once; that garnish'd
 The drawing-room of fierce Queen Mary.

The Peereſs comes. The audience ſtare,
 And doff their hats with due ſubmiſſion:
 She curſies, as ſhe takes her chair,
 To all the people of condition.

The Bard, with many an artful fib,
 Had in imagination fence'd him,
 Diſprov'd the arguments of * Squib,
 And all that † Groom could urge againſt him.

But ſoon his rhetoric forſook him,
 When he the ſolemn hall had ſeen;
 A ſudden fit of ague ſhook him,
 He ſtood as mute as poor † Maclean.

Yet ſomething he was heard to mutter,
 "How in the Park, beneath an old tree,
 "Without deſign to hurt the butter,
 "Or any malice to the poultry,)

"He once or twice had penn'd a ſonnet;
 "Yet hoped, that he might ſave his bacon:
 "Numbers would give their oaths upon it,
 "He ne'er was for a conjurer taken."

The ghottly prudes with hagg'd ** face
 Already had condemn'd the finner.

My

* Groom of the Chamber. G. † The Steward. G.

† A famous highwayman, hanged the week before. G.

** Hagg'd, *i. e.* the face of a witch or hag; the epithet Hagard has been

My Lady rose, and with a grace—
She smil'd, and bid him come to dinner *.

“ Jesu-Maria! Madam Bridget,
“ Why, what can the Viscountess mean?
(Cried the square-hoods in woeful fidget)
“ The times are alter'd quite and clean!

“ Decorum's turn'd to mere civility;
“ Her air and all her manners shew it.
“ Commend me to her affability!
“ Speak to a Commoner and Poet!”

[Here 500 Stanzas are lost.]

And so God save our noble King,
And guard us from long-winded Lubbers,
That to eternity would sing,
And keep my Lady from her Rubbers.

been sometimes mistaken, as conveying the same idea; but it means a very different thing, viz. wild and farouche, and is taken from an unreclaimed hawk, called an Hagard. M.

* Here the story finishes; the exclamation of the Ghosts which follows is characteristic of the Spanish manners of the age, when they are supposed to have lived; and the 500 stanzas, said to be lost, may be imagined to contain the remainder of their long-winded expostulation. M.

ODE

...and with a friend
...and the door is closed.

...and the door is closed.
...and the door is closed.
...and the door is closed.

...and the door is closed.
...and the door is closed.
...and the door is closed.

...and the door is closed.
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...and the door is closed.
...and the door is closed.
...and the door is closed.

ODE FOR MUSICK,

Performed in the Senate-House at Cambridge, July 1, 1769, at the Installation of his Grace Augustus-Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Grafton, Chancellor of the University.

I.

" HENCE, avaunt ('tis holy ground),
 " Comus, and his midnight-crew,
 " And Ignorance with looks profound,
 " And dreaming Sloth of pallid hue,
 " Mad Sedition's cry profane,
 " Servitude that hugs her chain,
 " Nor in these consecrated bowers
 " Let painted Flattery hide her serpent-train in flowers.
 " Nor Envy base, nor creeping Gain,
 " Dare the Muse's walk to stain,
 " While bright-eyed Science watches round :
 " Hence, away, 'tis holy ground !"

II.

From yonder realms of empyrean day
 Bursts on my ear th' indignant lay :
 There sit the fainted Sage, the Bard divine,
 The Few, whom Genius gave to shine
 Through every unborn age, and undiscover'd clime.
 Rapt in celestial transport they,
 Yet hither oft a glance from high
 They send of tender sympathy

To

To bless the place, where on their opening soul
 First the genuine ardor stole.
 'Twas Milton struck the deep-ton'd shell,
 And, as the choral warblings round him swell,
 Meek Newton's self bends from his state sublime,
 And nods his hoary head, and listens to the rhyme.

III.

" Ye brown o'er-arching Groves,
 " That Contemplation loves,
 " Where willowy Camus lingers with delight !
 " Oft at the blush of dawn
 " I trod your level lawn,
 " Oft woo'd the gleam of Cynthia silver-bright
 " In cloisters dim, far from the haunts of Folly,
 " With Freedom by my side, and soft-eyed Melancholy."

IV.

But hark ! the portals sound, and pacing forth
 With solemn steps and slow,
 High Potentates, and Dames of royal birth,
 And mitred Fathers in long order go :
 Great * Edward, with the lilies on his brow
 From haughty Gallia torn,
 And † sad Chatillon, on her bridal morn
 That wept her bleeding Love, and princely ‡ Clare,

And

* Edward the Third ; who added the Fleur de lys of France to the arms of England. He founded Trinity College.

† Mary de Valentia, Countess of Pembroke, daughter of Guy de Chatillon Comte de St. Paul in France : of whom tradition says, that her husband Audemar de Valentia, Earl of Pembroke, was slain at a tournament on the day of his nuptials. She was the foundress of Pembroke College or Hall, under the name of Aula Mariæ de Valentia.

‡ Elizabeth de Burg, Countess of Clare, was wife of John de Burg, son and

And * Anjou's Heroine, and † the paler Rose,
 The rival of her crown, and of her woos,
 And ‡ either Henry there,
 The murder'd Saint, and the majestic Lord,
 That broke the bonds of Rome.
 (Their tears, their little triumphs o'er,
 Their human passions now no more,
 Save Charity, that glows beyond the tomb)
 All that on Granta's fruitful plain
 Rich streams of regal bounty pour'd,
 And bade these awful fanes and turrets rise,
 To hail their Fitzroy's festal morning come;
 And thus they speak in soft accord
 The liquid language of the skies.

V.

"What is Grandeur, what is Power?
 "Heavier toil, superior pain.
 "What the bright reward we gain?
 "The grateful memory of the Good.
 "Sweet is the breath of vernal shower,
 "The bee's collected treasures sweet,
 "Sweet music's melting fall, but sweeter yet
 "The still small voice of Gratitude."

and heir of the Earl of Ulster, and daughter of Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, by Joan of Acres, daughter of Edward the First. Hence the Poet gives her the epithet of Princely. She founded Clare Hall.

* Margaret of Anjou, wife of Henry the Sixth, foundress of Queen's College. The Poet has celebrated her conjugal fidelity in a former Ode.

† Elizabeth Widville, wife of Edward the Fourth (hence called the paler Rose, as being of the House of York). She added to the foundation of Margaret of Anjou.

‡ Henry the Sixth and Eighth. The former the founder of King's, the latter the greatest benefactor to Trinity College.

VI. Fore-

VI.

Foremost and leaning from her golden cloud
The * venerable Marg'ret see!

" Welcome, my noble Son (she cries aloud),

" To this, thy kindred train, and me:

" Pleas'd in thy lineaments we trace

" A † Tudor's fire, a Beaufort's grace.

" Thy liberal heart, thy judging eye,

" The flower unheeded shall descry,

" And bid it round heaven's altars shed

" The fragrance of its blushing head:

" Shall raise from earth the latent gem

" To glitter on the diadem.

VII.

" Lo, Granta waits to lead her blooming band,

" Not obvious, not obtrusive, she

" No vulgar praise, no venal incense flings;

" Nor dares with courtly tongue refin'd

" Profane thy inborn royalty of mind:

" She reveres herself and thee.

" With modest pride to grace thy youthful brow

" The laureate wreath, § that Cecil wore, she brings,

" And to thy just, thy gentle hand

" Submits the Fasces of her sway,

" While Spirits blest above and Men below

" Join with glad voice the loud symphonious lay.

* Countess of Richmond and Derby; the mother of Henry the Seventh, foundress of St. John's and Christ's College.

† The Countess was a Beaufort, and married to a Tudor: hence the application of this line to the Duke of Grafton, who claims descent from both these families.

§ Lord Treasurer Burleigh was Chancellor of the University, in the reign of Q. Elizabeth.

" Through

VIII.

“ Through the wild waves as they roar
“ With watchful eye and dauntless mien
“ Thy steady course of honour keep,
“ Nor fear the rocks, nor seek the shore :
“ The Star of Brunswick smiles serene,
“ And gilds the horrors of the deep.”

F I N I S.

VIII.

"Through the wild waves of the deep"
 "With wretched eyes"
 "The ready count"
 "The fear the rocks"
 "The Star of Bunker"
 "And glides the horrors of the deep."



U. N. I. S.